

NOW THEN.

JONNY WAN. BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH. WARREN ELLIS.

A MAGAZINE FOR SHEFFIELD. ISSUE 55. FREE.



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NOW THEN IS A FREE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR PEOPLE IN SHEFFIELD.

We aim to cultivate choice, voice and responsibility by providing a platform for independent art, trade, music, writing and local news. We support Sheffield's economy by only working with independent traders, community groups, charities and local government.

Almost all articles published in this magazine are written by members of the community, not professionals. If you don't like what you read or have something that needs to be said, get in touch. Your opinions make Now Then what it is.

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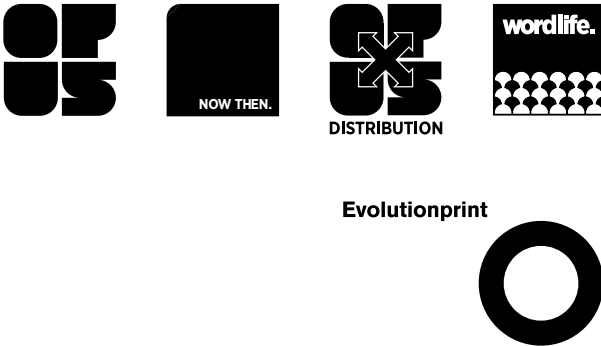
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Enjoy the read.



EDITORIAL.

This month's magazine is our best for some time. Teaming up with Off The Shelf Festival of Words for the third year in a row, we have brought together a real mixture of content for you, including interviews with internationally renowned dub poet Benjamin Zephaniah, local poetry stalwart Matt Black, and violinist Warren Ellis, a founding member of Dirty Three who has also played with Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds and Grinderman in recent years.

Elsewhere, you will find articles on squatting, Sheffield book shops, community ownership, tandoori food, Sheffield Bach Society and much more. Turn to page 26 for a list of our recommended Off The Shelf events throughout October and November. There is just too much to fit onto our pages, so go and have a look at offtheshelf.org.uk for the comprehensive programme. There really is something for everyone.

Our art feature comes from Sheffield-bred Jonny Wan, whose striking use of colour and geometry is a hit in our books. Now refining his techniques on the other side of the Pennines, Jonny is a humble creator whose illustrations have rightly been attracting interest from publications like the Financial Times recently.

If you are new to the city, we recommend getting out of your residential bubble and seeing what Sheffield has to offer. You might be surprised by what you find.

For those of you who live in Manchester or are over there regularly, this month marks the launch of the Now Then Manchester magazine, which will feature its own original content written by local people, plus a couple of articles and reviews shared with its Sheffield counterpart. Despite being based on the same model, Now Then Manchester is very much its own entity, covering issues that affect Mancunians in the same way that the Sheffield mag tries to represent our city.

If you have any queries about our sister publication, drop editor Ian a line on ian@nowthenmagazine.com

SAM.

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LOCALCHECK.

SQUATTING.
HOSTED BY ALT-SHEFF.

Did you notice our wizard government has magically criminalised squatting in empty residential houses? This follows hysterical headlines about smelly squatters and respectable homeowners, as angry as the three bears finding Goldilocks asleep in their bed. Of course this is an exaggerated caricature, because most squatting takes place in properties left unused for far too long by speculators, corporations and absentee landlords. Why would squatters attract bad publicity by invading a private home? Not that this has never happened, but it's obviously pretty exceptional. In general, squatting is about homeless people finding somewhere to live, quietly and for as long as they can.

Squatting may be something we'd rather not face up to; a sign of a creaking, cracking system. Compare it to unemployment, or protests which turn violent, or the growing numbers of people imprisoned – these are signs that things aren't working, even in one of the world's most 'developed' countries. People are suffering, and the basic need for a home is a massive problem for many. Anyone buying their own home might forget how difficult it can be to get a place, at various stages in life, or in circumstances ranging from unemployment to abusive relationships.

An empty property is a crime when people are homeless and desperate. Squatting takes the pressure off. It's not a social problem – it's a symptom of one.

Once upon a time there never was a golden age of happy housing sufficiency. On the contrary, squatting has always been necessary. After the war it was widespread, because so many houses had been bombed. Sheffield has a long and interesting history of squats, despite clamp downs in recent years. Famous squats include the year-long Matilda Social Centre, complete with café, music, internet, free shop, films and workshops. Occupy Sheffield's move into the former Salvation Army Citadel near the Peace Gardens last year was another example. Sheffield Indymedia archives much of the people's history of these organised actions.

There's no shortage of accommodation, just a bad system of distribution. There are far more empty properties than people needing a roof over their heads. Land ownership in this country is in too few hands, and consequently prices are shocking.

The powerful construction industry complains that it needs planning restrictions removed. This is a lie. The big players go to the High Court to 'out appeal' any council or pressure group. Many planning permissions are granted where building doesn't go ahead. Developers benefit from over-bloated property prices and low supply. Heads they win, tails they win.

Homelessness has shot up. Rents are exploitative. That's one reason why the Sheffield Defend Council Housing group came together recently and ensured an 88% majority vote to return the city's council estates back to the Council, away from covert privatisation moves and back to direct accountability.

Demographics matters as well. We're living longer, with many older people staying on in much-loved homes, sometimes larger than they need. The result is that housing for others becomes limited. One answer is easy; homeshare. Younger people needing a place can bring a breath of fresh air to the lives of older people with spare bedrooms, couples or single, perhaps feeling lonely or isolated. Usually a bit of work around the house is agreed in return for accommodation. This is so clearly a great idea, it's hard to believe there isn't yet a Sheffield Homeshare scheme. Anyone reading this want to set one up?

Meanwhile, like the 1920s prohibition of alcohol, the criminalisation of squatting could well see a resurgence of activity. Squatting commercial property is only a civil offence. Seen any empty offices or factories? Squatting activist groups are gearing up to challenge the new law and how it's implemented. The Advisory Service For Squatters has been established for years, and a new group, the Eviction Resistance Network has also popped up. There doesn't seem to be a Sheffield squatting support group at the moment, but perhaps that will change. If it does, Alt-Sheff will be pleased to bring news. Watch this vacant space.

sheffield.indymedia.org.uk
homeshare.org
squatter.org.uk
evictionresistance.blogspot.co.uk



BOOKS.

TRAWLING SHEFFIELD’S BOOK SHOPS.
TIM FEBEN.

Holiday booked, six weeks out of the country in distant lands – finally a chance to catch up on an ever-growing list of books that I’ve thought about reading ever since I’ve thought about reading books.

Step one I thought – make a list. Lists have their own odd sort of satisfaction. As I would be away for a while I figured I could fit in a fair few:

Milan Kundera’s **The Book of Laughter and Forgetting** or **Immortality**, two books journeying through a “hedonist’s love of eroticism, fantasy and fun with knife sharp political satire,” to quote Salman Rushdie. Primo Levi’s **If This Is A Man**, a revered book detailing the writer’s time as a prisoner in Auschwitz, but focusing on the strength, resilience and indestructibility of the human spirit. Add to these, Murakami’s **Kafka on the Shore** , Louis de Bernières’ **The War of Don Emmanuel’s Nether Parts**, Marquez’s **Love in the Time of Cholera** and Iain M Banks’ **The Player of Games**... I already had too many.

My first stop was Porter Books on Sharrow Vale Road. Despite the ‘Back in 5 Minutes’ sign, the owner eventually showed up to let me and a few other customers in. This place hosts a fantastic collection of random books and a pleasingly hodge-podge approach to shelving. Levi and de Bernières dispatched from the list and, at £5 for the pair, a bargain.

Next I decided to investigate two shops off Rustlings Road by Endcliffe Park. The Last Chapter is located on the corner of the road overlooking the park. Not a large bookshop by any means – and thus initially casting doubt on the likelihood of direct hits on my list – but before the owner could finish his ‘Can I help?’, I had the Murakami I was after in my hands. The shop is well kept and has a delightful range of well-chosen books to make up for its limited shelf space. The books themselves were all in almost-new condition and averaged at only a couple of quid each. I ended up with Iain M Banks and one of the Kunderas off the list and was offered a deal to bag another, Jason Elliot’s book of his journeys in Iran, **Mirrors of the Unseen**. A highly recommended shop.

Across the road is the recently relocated and slightly larger Books on The Park, boasting a large and diverse collection ranging from fiction, religion and philosophy to poetry and the odd vinyl too. As with all the shops thus far, we’re talking about a shopping experience as alien to Meadowhall as any sign of culture, all with calm peaceful atmospheres, un-pushy but helpful staff and a sense of how fundamentally important shops like this are for a learned human race. I could spend a happy afternoon in places like this without buying anything.

This almost materialised in my next stop. The Rude Shipyard on Abbeydale Road is not just a bookshop, but also a great cafe and general meeting place for the like-minded. The owners casually allowed me to rest my lockless bike in the shop while I weaved among engrossed readers whiling away an afternoon in style. Perfect for those too impatient to get home before tucking in to their latest purchase.

Also well worth a mention is the Age UK charity shop on Broomhill high street, where every available surface is crammed full, and which provided more books from my list. You can almost hear a pin drop here, with peaceful staff seemingly busy devouring as many books in their lifetime as physically possible, as realised with the purchase of several books that were personally recommended one after another.

The intention of this article is to draw your attention to the wealth of second-hand book shops Sheffield has to offer. They’re not all full of worthless, boring old books and grumpy aging men – quite the contrary, in fact. By the end of the afternoon, I had most of the books on my list, with none costing more than £3.

Add to those already mentioned, Rare and Racy on Division Street, Oxfam (various) and the host of other charity shops across the city and we’re spoilt for choice. So why not make your own list and support some local businesses in need of your custom. If we don’t all want to succumb to reading books on a digital screen, and want these vital shops to still exist in years to come, we need to get out there and buy some books.

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PAPA WESTRAY.

A MODEL OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP.
BEN ECKERSLEY.

Papa Westray, known locally as Papay, is a small island at the far north end of the Orkney Isles, an archipelago off the north coast of Scotland. Measuring just four by one miles, with a population of 75 people, it is one of the most isolated places in the UK. Getting there is not easy. There is a small airstrip, and the ten-seater plane makes the two minute hop from the neighbouring island of Westray every day – for trivia fans, this is the shortest scheduled flight in the world – but you still have to make the lengthy trek to Orkney first. If you prefer to stick to land and sea, a trip from Inverness – the nearest town of any significant size, and still a long way from most of the UK – would involve over three hours on three different ferries, two 30-minute bus trips and nearly four hours on a train.

It's a truly beautiful island, with a gently rolling and very green landscape. The beaches are mile-long stretches of pure white sand looking over crystal clear blue seas. If it wasn't for the weather you could easily believe you were in Thailand. Dramatic cliffs and rocky coves are the breeding grounds for colonies of migrating birds every summer, including one of the most successful colonies of Arctic Terns anywhere, plus you can see seals, dolphins, puffins and all manner of other animals. Foremost out of the 60 or so archaeological sites on the island is the Knap of Howar, a Neolithic farmstead built in around 3,800 BC, predating even Ancient Egypt, making it the oldest building in northern Europe. Well worth a visit.

But none of this is why I chose to write about the island in this magazine. The island's infrastructure is built on an impressive principle of community ownership, a model that many larger cities could learn from. Island communities such as this have always had a slightly precarious existence, with depopulation a constant threat. In the past, many have failed. Famously, residents abandoned the islands of St. Kilda in 1930. Papay, having seen its population halve from the 1960s to the turn of the century, has seen an impressive resurgence in recent years and is now one of the few small islands in Scotland to have a rising population. Papay's history is different from much of the rest of the Highlands in that they were very quick to get rid of their laird in the early 20th Century. Much of the island then became common land, which could be used for grazing by any islander. It is from these roots that the Papay Co-op was born.

For a tiny island like this, the population want for very little in terms of facilities. The main community building now houses an amazing shop – the kind of place that sells one of everything – a café, hostel, community centre and at weekends a pub and an occasional cinema. The entire complex was built to serve the community, is owned by the community (all islanders are shareholders), employs members of the community and profits are ploughed back into the community. Tourism is encouraged with regular tours of the island. The money earned from the tours pays for the island's minibus, which acts as the local school bus, taxi, even an ambulance when it is needed. As well as this, the island owns its own water company, and regular farmer's markets mean that produce grown on the island can be sold easily. Other Scottish islands, such as Fair Isle and Unst, have gone as far as creating their own green energy companies, with renewable power created on the islands enabling residents to take themselves off the national grid.

As well as this, the nature of employment and housing on the island, where everyone earns more or less the same and all the houses are similar, breeds a sense of contentment and happiness with one's place in life that only a truly equal society can bring. The islanders I met were very keen to stress the point that when their friends and neighbours all have what they have and vice versa, and when advertising for expensive products and lifestyles is conspicuously absent, there is no culture of envy or greed. People take only what they need, and everyone is comfortable and secure because of it.

In Sheffield, as in every major UK city, where most of the money you spend is whisked away into private wealth and rarely benefits you or your community, we need to follow the example of the tiny but thriving island of Papa Westray. Spend money where you can follow where it will go, engage with co-operative enterprises, support local trade, and see the life of the place you live improve because of it.

papawestray.co.uk



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MACBETH.

10TH SEPTEMBER. CRUCIBLE.
REVIEWER - PHILL JAMES.

The Crucible's Artistic Director, Daniel Evans, closes the theatre's 40th anniversary season this month by stepping into the director's shoes for Shakespeare's famous Scottish tragedy, Macbeth. The play is one of my all-time favourites and after seeing fine versions of first Hamlet and then Othello since the theatre reopened, I had high hopes that never came close to being dashed. This is a version of Macbeth that is a privilege to watch from start to finish.

For the first time in over ten years coming to this magnificent theatre, the Crucible's stage took on a full 360 degree approach. Stalls had been placed at the back of the arena and the play was performed to all sections of a near capacity crowd.

Macbeth is a brutal and bloody play and Evans and his team pulled out all the stops to create an atmosphere that was tense and claustrophobic throughout. Over the years, lighting and sound effects have become key factors in productions like this, but rarely have they been used with such skill. Lightning struck, thunder roared, smoke oozed from the floor, and in one memorable scene the stage was transformed into a sea of deep, crimson blood.

The appeal of Shakespeare after all these years is that these are plays that don't just demand to be read, but that demand to be performed. Sheffield has a fine theatre company and the performances in Macbeth were consistently superb.

Claudie Blakley is a terrifying Lady Macbeth. She commands the stage with regal presence and the scenes with her and Geoffrey Streatfeild drip with menace and an underlying passion. Streatfeild himself is the pick of an impressive cast. His Macbeth initially seems weak and timed, but his transformation to killer and subsequent descent into madness is believable and haunting.

The rest of the cast fill out the supporting roles with gusto and panache, but in the end this is a show that belongs to Evans. The play is paced expertly, which is rare in itself for a Shakespearean tragedy, but it is the constant, underlying threat of terror which Evans builds so well. Rarely (if ever) have I been so scared watching a play. This is a first-hand look at the dark minds and actions of killers, and Evans gets beneath the human psyche and exposes it for all the audience to see.

Even in a production as fluent as this, one scene stood out. To give away too much would be ruining it for anyone lucky enough to catch this run, but the first act ends with the most brilliant unveiling of the ghost of Banquo. In just a few minutes, the play manages to be horrific, humorous and finally heart breaking.

Macbeth is not always easy viewing, but this is a fantastically skin crawling version of one of Shakespeare's finest tragedies. Macbeth is bold, bloody and brilliant. Daniel Evans, the cast and everyone associated with this production deserve to take a large, handsome bow.

Macbeth runs at The Crucible until 6th October.

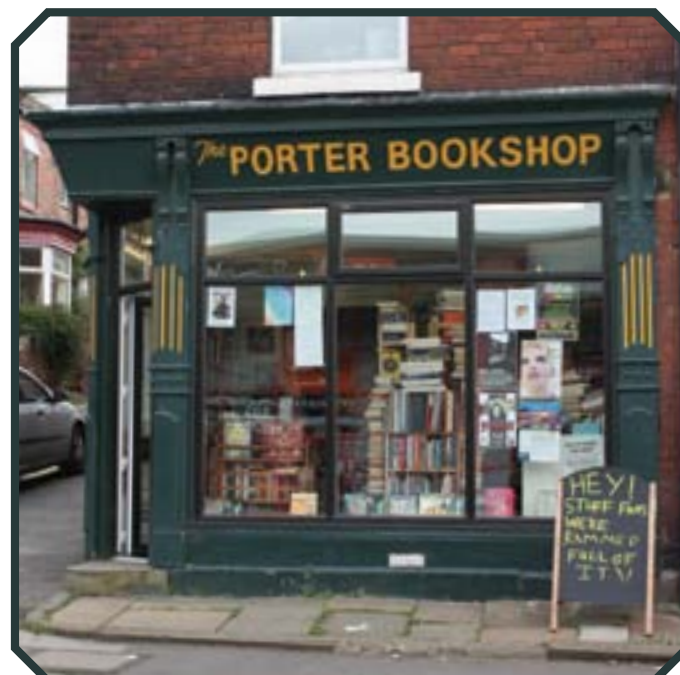
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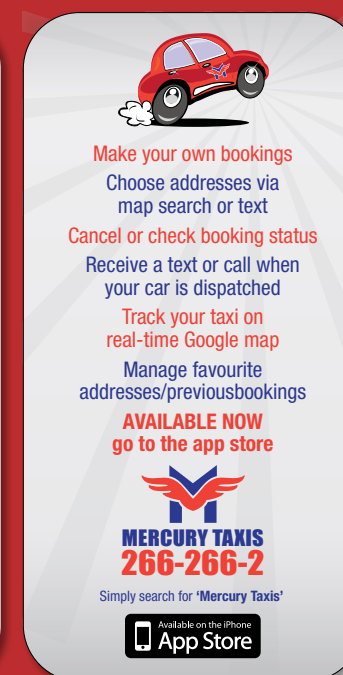
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FOOD.

THE JOY OF THE TANDOOR.
CASSIE KILL.

Many people think that tandoori is a combination of flavours or a particular recipe style. In fact, it refers to food cooked in the tandoor, a charcoal fired clay oven. The tandoor works so well because the intense heat generated by the charcoal in the clay vessel causes the meat or fish to cook very quickly, becoming crispy on the outside and staying juicy in the middle. Naan bread can also be cooked in a tandoor by pressing the dough onto the inside walls. The ceramic sides of the clay pot trap in the heat, with just a narrow opening at the top. Traditionally, the tandoor is often buried in the ground to further insulate it. The charcoal gives a rich, smoky taste which perfectly complements the various spice mixes used.

These spices are often mixed with natural yoghurt as the acidity and enzymes help the flavour penetrate the meat, although you can use an oil-based marinade (see fish recipe on opposite page) or a dry spice mix if you work it in well. Ground coriander, cumin, ginger, garlic, cayenne pepper, chilli and garam masala are all good additions to a tandoori marinade. These give a great range of aromatic flavours and the cayenne or chilli can be added to taste, depending on how hot you like your spice. The strong red or yellow colours we associate with tandoori foods traditionally come from ground annatto and saffron respectively, but if these are not available, don't worry – it'll still taste great.

Cooking at home will never replicate the exact results of the tandoor, but there are a couple of ways of getting a similar outcome fairly simply, or you can just use a medium hot grill if you're in a rush:

CHARCOAL BARBECUE.

Marinate your meat in either dry spices or a spice and yoghurt mixture. Thread the pieces onto a long metal skewer and cook on a hooded charcoal barbecue to trap in that flavoursome smoke.

TANDOORI IN THE OVEN.

You'll need a baking stone (often used for cooking pizzas in the oven) as large as possible, as long as it leaves a narrow (approx 2cm) gap around the edge of the rack for hot air to circulate. You'll also need a clay pot. Try searching for tandoori clay pots to see the range of options available. Generally, you'll need to heat the stone and pot inside the oven from cold and some pots need to be soaked first.



TANDOORI FISH.

Serves 2. Recipe by Cassie Kill.

½ tsp garam masala powder
½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground cumin
Pinch of ground turmeric
1 tsp fresh ginger, chopped
2 small cloves of garlic, chopped
Cayenne pepper (to taste)

2 large fillets of white fish (e.g. grey mullet) – skin on, bones removed as far as possible, and scored through the skin.
3 large tomatoes
5 tbsp vegetable oil
Juice of ½ lemon
1 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped

Add the spices, chopped ginger and garlic to a blender with salt and pepper. Add tomatoes and four tablespoons of vegetable oil and blend until you have a thick liquid for your marinade.

Line a large, deep baking tray with foil and grease lightly with vegetable oil. Place the fish on it, skin facing up, and pour the marinade over the top evenly. Cover and place in the fridge to marinate for 15 to 20 minutes.

Grill for five minutes under a medium heat, until the skin starts to char slightly and the fish is cooked. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice and fresh coriander.

RAITA.

250ml natural yoghurt
½ cucumber, grated or finely chopped
A generous handful of mint leaves, chopped
A large pinch of salt

Grate or chop the cucumber into a bowl. Wrap the grated cucumber in a clean tea towel and squeeze out any excess water. This prevents the raita becoming too watery later. Mix together all the ingredients and serve chilled as a great partner to tandoori meat or fish, especially if you like it fiery.



TANDOORI CHICKEN.

Serves 2. Recipe by Freddie Bates.

400g chicken breast, cut into strips
½ tsp coriander
½ tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp cumin
¼ tsp turmeric
2 tbsp yoghurt
Juice of ½ a lemon

Cut the chicken into strips and marinate in the other ingredients for 3-4 hours. Get hold of a pizza stone and heat it up at the highest temperature your cooker will go (ideally at least 250°C). Leave it for 20 minutes until very hot, cover with a small amount of oil and lay the chicken strips on top. Cook for 5-10 minutes, until the chicken is cooked but still tender on the inside. Serve with raita and naan.

You can make a naan mixture very simply with a cup of flour, 3 heaped tbsps of yoghurt, salt and pepper. Leave the mixture in the fridge for half an hour, break into four, roll out thin and cook on the pizza stone for about five minutes. Add a pinch of baking powder to the mixture for extra crispy naan.



Maybe it's the lively atmosphere that makes the Mogul Room so special or perhaps it is the open-hearted service team that makes dinning here so worth while. The menu is unique and unparralled in sheffield. The food is both fresh and mouthwatering. The flavours are fused magnificently. Yet there is only one way to decide what makes the mogul room stand out, and that is to experience its charms for yourself.



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OFF THE SHELF 2012.

A CELEBRATION OF WORDS.
JOE KRISS.

Off The Shelf is Sheffield's annual festival of reading and writing. This month's edition of Now Then is an Off The Shelf special, featuring poems, interviews and listings all taken from their programme. It's a nigh impossible task to give you a summary of the range of events that are happening as part of the festival, but it's important to note there's something for everyone. The programme always includes a mixture of poetry, prose, comedy, interviews, collaborations between different art forms, exhibitions and a range of workshops for both young and old alike. Benjamin Zephaniah is guest curating a few events this year on the theme of 'giving young people a voice'. You can read more about those in our interview with him (page 20). Hopefully the events will create a great legacy for young people in Sheffield.

There are events exploring Sheffield's Victorian workhouses and the city's past through ghost stories at the Lantern Theatre. There's political satire from Steve Bell and a rare chance to see Sharon Olds ('America's greatest living poet', The Guardian) performing at Sheffield University. Musicians Peter Hook from Joy Division and Tom Hingley from Inspiral Carpets are also launching their respective books.

There's the writers group fair on 13th October, where you can find a group to suit your tastes and you can air those poems and prose you've been working on. There's also the Sheffield Book Fair on 28th October, where there will be a whole range of new and second-hand books available.

It's another great line up despite increased funding pressure in our unfortunate economic climate. Even for people who wouldn't normally attend literature events, there's lots to see, including Mark Grist of Don't Flop rap battle fame performing at The Riverside on 23rd October.

For the full programme head over to offtheshelf.org.uk and book your tickets before they sell out.



BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH.

OFF THE SHELF GUEST CURATOR TALKS TO NOW THEN.
INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY & JOE KRISS.

Benjamin Zephaniah is an internationally renowned poet, novelist, playwright, musician, actor and public speaker. Born in Handsworth, Birmingham, the young Zephaniah fell in with the wrong crowd and was in trouble with the law on a number of occasions, before leaving his life behind and moving to London in the early 80s in pursuit of his dream of becoming a professional poet.

He was to become instrumental in the popularisation of performance poetry in the UK, eventually being categorised as a “dub poet” due to the strong links between his writing and the rhythms of reggae music. Since then he has written five albums, various plays and youth novels, made film appearances and presented radio shows, all the while remaining an outspoken yet humble supporter of many good causes, both at home and abroad.

We caught up with Benjamin ahead of his appearance at Off The Shelf 2012 to talk about curating youth events, breaking down the barriers between audience and performer, and Jamaican independence.

You’re curating three youth events as part of Off The Shelf this year. How did you find the poets and what are you hoping to achieve with the events?

First of all, I have to say that asking me to curate was a good plan, because if they’d said, “Just come along, do something and then go home,” I probably wouldn’t have done it.

What I’ve always wanted to do is give people a voice. I’ve always tried to give people a voice that don’t normally have a voice; get people on stage who don’t normally get on stage; get people to listen to other people who they wouldn’t normally listen to. So I’m working with young people; probably poetry is not their first priority in life, probably they’ve had a bit of a rough deal in life. They certainly would never be listened to by adults. To source those people, we talked to social workers, probation officers, people who work with young people, and asked who they thought would be up for it.

With the Poetry Party [for 7-11 year olds], we sent out a message to some schools and I think that was very quickly oversubscribed, so no problem there.

I’m a professor of poetry and creative writing at Brunel University, so for the Benjamin Zephaniah and Friends up-and-coming poets event, I thought right, I’ve got a poet that’s graduated from there that’s trying to make his way on the spoken word scene, and another woman who’s a student, who’s done a little bit of performing but mainly on protest marches and things like that. She’s a strong Muslim woman, so I thought if we could let her have a voice, with an audience like this, it would be good.

With the Poetry Party in particular, it’s about giving kids a positive first experience of poetry, isn’t it?

The reason why I call it a Poetry Party is that, as much as possible, although we’re in a theatre for this one, we try and get a party atmosphere. So it’s like going to a party for the kids, but instead of having music, we have poetry. We make our own music with our own words. It’s a very simple concept but kids love it. They don’t have to get up and perform – some just sit back and enjoy it. You

know, not everybody goes to a party and dances – some hang out in the kitchen.

Do you think performance poetry is more inclusive than the more traditional poetry establishment?

If I thought so, I’d say yes, but actually I know so – absolutely know so. A man said to me the other day – I was in Hull – he said, “I don’t understand it. I’m a white, heterosexual, middle aged male, born in this country and living here all my life. I can’t seem to get any gigs - any poetry readings.” I told him, “With all due respect, we’ve been listening to you for years.” Now is the time for all the marginalised groups to come up – immigrants, lesbians, gays, people who have been outsiders – for them to have a say. Of course there are straight white men in there, but you’ve got to come with something new to say to the world.

You’ve spoken in the past of your dream of establishing a healthy performance poetry scene in the UK. How far do you think this has been achieved?

I’m going to start sounding like I’m blowing my own trumpet here, but I think we have done really well. I can remember when there was no performance poetry scene here. People like me and Linton Kwesi Johnson encouraged people to hold nights. I can remember hiring halls, and people saying, “A poetry reading? This is the middle of Brixton. It’s 1984, there are riots all over the place and you want to hold a poetry reading?” And we packed it out, and proved that we could do it. We wanted to create a scene where it’s just normal for people to go out and listen to poetry, and nowadays a boy and a girl can go out on a date and listen to poetry. That would’ve been crazy back then.

It’s to do with breaking down the barriers between performer and audience, isn’t it? Making it like a conversation between friends.

That really is it. I know that when I’m on stage, there are people in the audience that are more educated and well read than me. What have I done to deserve to be up there? I just happen to be able to tell my story in a particular way, but I don’t want a barrier of “me and them”.

In Pakistan and in other parts of Asia they have a thing called mushaira. It’s a poetry performance, but as you’re performing they ask you to do that line again, do that verse again, or somebody in the audience will say, “I’ve got a poem like that, do you want to hear it?” and they stand up and do it. I’ve done that in England. When you’ve got no fancy stuff – no guitars, no computers, nothing – the only thing that makes you different is that the lights are turned on you, and you can just as easily turn the lights on them too.

What would you say was the turning point in your career?

I’d like to go back a bit and talk about a turning point in my life. I was living in Birmingham. I remember the night exactly. I went to bed, and there was a guy at my door with a gun protecting me. I was sleeping with a gun underneath my pillow. There was some gang that wanted us and we were after them. I’d not long had a friend that was shot and another that was doing a life sentence. I woke the next morning and said, “I’m not doing this anymore.” When I think about it, where was I actually going? I just drove to London. I didn’t have anybody, but I just knew I had to get out of that scene. So that was the real turning point in my life.

I suppose in terms of poetry, I remember when I started, I’d get £5 a gig, sometimes £10. And I remember NME released a cassette

called the NME Racket Packet, and it was new and up-and-coming artists. They did a gig that went with it, and they offered me a fee of £70. I thought, “£70! I’ve arrived!”

Do you think the humour in your poetry makes it more memorable?

I think the mixture of rhyme and humour, if you’re putting a serious political message over... at a grassroots level it’s a way people remember things, it’s a way people think about things. My poem ‘Macho Man’ has people laughing their heads off, but at the same time it’s showing up the macho men. Sometimes I can see girlfriends looking at their boyfriends and saying, “That’s you, that is!” The amount of people who’ve told me that they remember that poem – they can’t remember the exact words but they remember the gist – it just sparks conversations and debates, and I love that. It’s what I want to do.

Do you have any advice for poets who want to perform and get published?

First of all, in terms of your writing, be honest. Don’t go with fads and fashions because they fade, and if you’re known for being attached to one trend, when that trend’s gone you can’t complain. The world doesn’t owe you a living.

In terms of getting published, I would say start with performing if you can. Just go to an open mic night and do a poem. If it doesn’t go down well, you will know why, because you can see and feel why. Maybe it needs tweaking or you need to do something else, but the audience’s response is immediate. It’s not like giving a poem to a publisher and waiting for weeks for them to reply and say, “It didn’t quite work for me.” Once you’ve got a bit of clout on stage, as long as you can think about writing for the page in a different way, you can do it.

You were recently featured on a few radio shows talking about the 50th anniversary of Jamaican independence. What did this mean to you as a milestone?

I’ve been asked a load of things about Jamaican independence and I keep saying the same thing – Jamaica has never been truly independent in my view. The highest court in Jamaica is actually the Privy Council, which is in London, and the head of state is the Queen.

It is a milestone in the sense that the weight of the colonial masters is taken off Jamaica, in a very real and physical sense, but one of the major problems is with corruption that starts at the top. I remember being in a Jamaican school, and saying to the kids, “Don’t forget education is really important”. And this little kid got up and said, “Sir, I don’t want to disrespect you, but you must understand that in our country, the most educated people are the most corrupt.” I had to look him in the eye and say, “I completely agree with you, but the reason why you’ve got to get an education is that you’ve got to show us a different way.”

Benjamin Zephaniah will host the following youth events as part of Off The Shelf 2012:

The Youth Word Up – 13-19 years – 8th October at The Hubs

Poetry Party – 7-11 years – 9th October at The Lyceum

Benjamin Zephaniah and Friends – young up-and-coming poets – 3rd November at The Lyceum

benjaminzephaniah.com

Our section is filled with poets from Off The Shelf this month, and we’re lucky to be able to include some high-profile names.

Blake Morrison is an award-winning poet and author, best known for his book ‘And When Did You Last See Your Father’, which was also adapted into a film. Michael Horovitz is also a veteran beat poet and leading member of counter-culture poetry circles, having rubbed shoulders with the likes of Ginsberg and Burroughs in the 1960s. River Wolton is an ex-Derbyshire poet laureate whose first full collection ‘Leap’ is available from The Poetry Business.

There is also a small selection of Sheffield-based poetry collectives contributing to this year’s festival listed below. We hope to see you at some of our events this month. The closing party on 2nd November is shaping up nicely. If any of the Off The Shelf events inspire you to take up writing, it’s a great chance to meet some of Sheffield’s leading writers and literature organisers.

OFF THE SHELF OPENING PARTY.

SUN 14TH OCTOBER. 7PM.
FORUM.
FREE.

We’re running our usual opening night party for Off The Shelf at The Forum again this year. It will be more raucous than your average poetry evening, featuring poet and comedian Kate Fox (Radio 4’s Saturday Live), live music and an open poetry slam, with the winner to be named Off the Shelf Slam Champion.

ANTI-SLAM.

FRIDAY 19TH OCTOBER. 7:30PM.
THE RIVERISDE.
£3/£2 (CONS).

The worst poet wins? What kind of poetry slam is that? An anti-slam, that’s what kind. A roaring success in Berlin and London, the Anti-Slam features ten esteemed Sheffield poets, all primed to literally do their worst. Join an audience ready to laugh, heckle and boo, especially at three judges, ready to crown Sheffield’s Worst Poet.

THE VARSITY POETRY SLAM.

TUESDAY 23RD OCTOBER. 7.30PM.
THE RIVERSIDE.
£4.

Watch students from the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University battled it out for cultural bragging rights. Featuring special guest Mark Grist, who’s no stranger to word jousting, having recently clocked up over 2 million views on his Don’t Flop Teacher/Student rap battle.

OFF THE SHELF PARTY.

FRIDAY 2ND NOVEMBER. 7.30PM.
QUEENS SOCIAL CLUB.
£5.

A one-off extravaganza from all of Sheffield’s regular open mic nights; Dead Beats, Speak Easy, Gorilla Events, Northern Lights, The Shipping Forecast, Spire Writers, ROMP, Slam Bam and Word Life. Featuring a slam between the night’s organisers and featured sets from Harry Baker (2011 European Slam Champion, 2012 Word Slam Champion) and David J The Vocal Pugilist (renowned poet and rapper who toured Europe with the Last Poets, and supported Patti Smith). And Featuring post rock band King Capisce- one of Sheffield’s leading live outfits.

SAME OLD-WORLD-DISORDER BLUES.

... Dull opiates, the technological millennium, famine
All continuing, thriving – with terrorists, pseudo-religious
Fixers and hucksters in vogue, inter-
Nationalist gang wars, unbreakable cupidinous
Chains of death sentence: State eats State, Superstar
Complete Unknown, punks scream for more and beat
Each others’ heads in – unaware
Of real wild life and vegetation
Dumb to scream *their* outrage ... of literature
Reduced to counter-denunciations, party lines
Conveyor-belts, trade counters. Wised up
Students need their good
Grades, for who survives in the west without self-
Promotion – Then what society
Is this, predatory jungle, spurning the basis
Of its self possession – that soldiers and idealists
Fought together, worked apart, under-
Wrote a withdrawal from killing? Yet what else gives now
But a slower demoralising of each neighbour, each
‘Friend’, if they venture on the other’s pitch, what use
Writing for sale, when to be read
For what one is worth
Means the reader gives up buying
The sales conference vision
- *Ever bigger profits* – without which
The untouchable bankruptcy
Of the dead-end process
Pushes
the pusher
off the edge
Of the corporation’s top
Penthouse balcony
To lie immobile, redundant – peace at last
Alongside the dissolving
Wrappers of The Product
On the pavement –
Splayed out, gutter
Of babylon.

MICHAEL HOROVITZ.

First published in Wordsounds & Sightlines: New & Selected Poems,
available via Central Books/New Departures – poetryolympics.com – and
reprinted here by kind permission of the author. Michael will perform at the
Showroom on 25th October as part of Off The Shelf.

PENDLE WITCHES.

On recs and at swimming pools
we searched for the girl
shy and uncomeatable –
through whose glimmering thigh-tops

the light would make a perfect O,
that florin emptiness
not the token of a virgin
but the hole in a lemmel-stone

to ward off the hags
who ran the Pennines
and who wanted to trap us
in the sossy peat of their maw.

BLAKE MORRISON.

Taken from A Discoverie of Witches (Litfest and Smith/Doorstop Books,
£12.95). Blake will read at the Poetry Business Off The Shelf event on 12th
October at The University of Sheffield Humanities Research Institute on Gell
Street, alongside Peter Carpenter and Catherine Smith.

A PSALM FOR THOSE WHO GO FORTH
ON THE DAY OF REDUNDANCY.

The boss is in early. Locks laptops
in the boot of his Beemer, clears desks.
The boss is in early, unslept, sweat.

The administrators are in before 8.
Ease their long-nosed Jags
into the car-park; snap
jackets tight, scope square footage,
size up loss. The administrators
are in before 8.

The shopfloor lads are in on time,
track twenty-five year routes
to the same bench, same tools;
reach for strange pens to sign
the forms; stand on the cliff-edge
of no paycheque. Nothing sayable,
nothing said. The shopfloor lads
are in on time.

And you, my darling, are in late,
in the suit you hate but forked out for.
Ladies pinstripe, Austin Reed.
Knew something brewing
from the books and how the boss
has siphoned off enough
for his escape. But still a foreign
state you walk into: the Jags,
the silent lads, the empty desk, the clutch
of everyone called in to stand and wait,
the home by dinner time. And you,
my darling, are in late.

RIVER WOLTON.

River Wolton will lead a workshop and perform at the 10th anniversary of
Sheffield Conversation Club on 1st November at Quaker Meeting House.



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Earlier this year, the Picture House was repossessed by Yorkshire Bank and will go to auction on 30th October.

Help us raise enough money to buy it back, and continue our mission to preserve and restore this unique building to its former glory, so that future generations can enjoy it as a hub of community arts.

If you can donate time or money to this project, get in touch on info@abbeydalepicturehouse.co.uk, or visit the website for more information.



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2012**

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LAUNCH PARTY
FRIDAY 28TH SEPT.**

FT. SPECIAL GUEST:
**SCOTT
MILLS**
(RADIO ONE)
!!!



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OFF THE SHELF LISTINGS.

WHAT NOT TO MISS AT OTS 2012.

Off The Shelf Festival of Words returns for its 21st outing this year, with hundreds of events aimed at all age ranges and interests taking place throughout October and November. There is far too much going on for us to list it all here, so these eight events are our pick of the bunch. Pick up a copy of the Off The Shelf programme in town or visit offthesheff.org.uk for a full list.

Tickets for all events can be bought at:

Arena Ticket Shop: arenaticketshop.co.uk / 0114 256 5567
Sheffield City Hall: sheffieldcityhall.co.uk / 0114 278 9789
Sheffield Theatres: sheffieldtheatres.co.uk / 0114 249 6000

ROBIN INCE'S BAD BOOK CLUB.

WEDNESDAY 10TH OCTOBER. 7.30PM.
CITY HALL.
£10/£8 (CONS).

Acclaimed comic Robin Ince talks the audience through a selection of novels that have been accepted into his Bad Book Club. From the trashy romance of Mills and Boon to a case of rampaging killer crabs, Ince takes a light-hearted look at things that probably shouldn't have made it to print, highlighting some of his favourites from his Book Club shows in London, at which he encouraged members of the audience to bring along second-hand books for him to poke fun at.

Bad Book Club has been nominated for the best live show at the British Comedy Awards, and Robin Ince has just finished his sell-out Uncaged Monkey tour.

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE DIGITISED.

MONDAY 22ND OCTOBER. 7PM.
SHOWROOM CINEMA.
£7.50/£5.50 (CONS).

Freelance journalist and author Heather Brooke explores how the rise of digital media has affected our everyday lives, the way governments use our data and how campaigners and activists are utilising new technologies to hold them to account. At the centre of the debate is a war over information and how it is used to control populations, giving rise to a number of urgent questions that will only become more relevant as time passes.

Heather Brooke is a journalist and Freedom of Information campaigner, best known for uncovering the MP expenses scandal. She is a visiting professor of journalism at City University and has written two books, **Your Right to Know** and **The Silent State**.

EVEREST THE OLD WAY.

MONDAY 22ND OCTOBER. 7.30PM.
STODDART BUILDING, HALLAM UNI.
£6/£5 (CONS).

In 1964, five trainee teachers pledged that they would trek to the base of Mount Everest after finishing their training in Sheffield. Three years later, after saving £300 each, they embarked on an epic journey, encompassing Europe, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal, before finally making it to the base camp of Everest. David Peckett and John Driskell talk through their experiences with the help of diary extracts, digitally enhanced photos of the original trip, and by comparison to a return visit made in 2010, with modern trekking equipment.

Recommended for climbers, hikers, travellers and those with a youthful sense of adventure.

MY LIFE WITH INSPIRAL CARPETS.

WEDNESDAY 24TH OCTOBER. 7.30PM.
SHEFFIELD UNI AUDITORIUM.
£9/£7 (CONS).

Inspirial Carpets were an influential band formed in Oldham in the early 80s, part of the "Madchester" scene that fused dance elements with rock sensibilities. Singer Tom Hingley talks about his experiences over the years, from chart hits, Top of the Pops appearances and music festivals to in-fighting and the eventual break-up of the band. Appearing in support of his new book, **Carpet Burns: My Life with Inspirial Carpets**, and also playing an acoustic set, Tom gives a unique account of an exciting time for music, both nationally and internationally.

Tom is a visiting lecturer at Salford University and is currently studying for a PhD in music performance.

OWEN JONES - CHAVS.

WEDNESDAY 24TH OCTOBER. 7PM.
SHOWROOM CINEMA.
£7.50/£5.50 (CONS).

Owen Jones' book **Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class** was released last year to a warm critical reception, being named the best-selling politics book of 2011 by The Sunday Times and The Bookseller. In this talk, Owen will discuss his theories about the term 'chav', and how the caricature it creates promotes prejudice and ignorance, rather than looking at the infinitely more complicated reality.

Owen Jones is a columnist for The Independent and has previously worked as a trade union lobbyist and parliamentary researcher.

THE MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD.

TUESDAY 30TH OCTOBER. 7PM.
SHOWROOM CINEMA.
TALK OR FILM: £7.50/£5.50 (CONS) / BOTH: £13/£9 (CONS).

Everyone loves a bit of Bowie. From the glammed-up androgyny of **Ziggy Stardust** to the sombre, Eno-influenced second half of **Low**, no-one reflected the ups and downs of the 70s more than this elusive and much mythologised performer. In this talk by cultural historian Peter Doggett, Bowie's influence on the world around him is laid bare through intelligent insights into his career and life as a musician, while his own sources of inspiration are also explored in depth. Peter Doggett has been writing about musical and cultural history for 30 years, having recently published **You Never Give Me Your Money**, a book about the break-up of The Beatles. This event will also include a screening of **The Man Who Fell to Earth**, a surreal sci-fi featuring Bowie's first starring film role.

INKLE INTERACTIVE.

WEDNESDAY 31ST OCTOBER. 2PM.
SHOWROOM CINEMA.
£7.50/£5.50 (CONS).

Software studio inkle, best-selling author Dave Morris and publisher Profile Books have created an interactive version of Mary Shelley's gothic horror **Frankenstein**. True to the original novel while at the same time giving participants the ability to shape the story as they see fit, Frankenstein for iPad provides a new way to enjoy a story that has inspired countless others since it was penned in 1818. Suitable for both adults and over 11s, this promises to be a refreshingly different take on a modern classic.

The afternoon will also feature a talk by Jon Ingold of inkle, who will explain how the novel was adapted and talk about the possibilities offered by the software. What better way to spend your Halloween?

SU BLACKWELL.

SUNDAY 4TH NOVEMBER. 11AM.
SHOWROOM.
£7.50/£5.50 (CONS)..

Su Blackwell is an artist who works primarily with paper, sculpting unique works of art from everyday objects and bringing the pages of books to life in three dimensions. Su Blackwell in Conversation will see the Sheffield-based creator talk about her career as an artist, during which she has had her pieces exhibited at The Bronte Parsonage Museum and The Graves Art Gallery, with two London shows approaching this autumn.

In the past Su has done illustrations for the likes of Vogue. Her most recent book, **The Fairytale Princess: Seven Classic Stories from the Enchanted Forest**, is a collaboration with Wendy Jones. The talk will be accompanied by images of her intricate work.



MATT BLACK.

POET LAUREATE OF DERBYSHIRE.
INTERVIEW BY JOE KRISS.

Matt Black is a bit of legend in these parts. An award-winning poet and flag waver for literature in South Yorkshire for over two decades, he's turned his hand at residencies, commissions, school work, events, publications, slams and is currently the poet laureate of Derbyshire. He is the founder of Signposts, South Yorkshire's leading literature development agency. A lot of people owe this man favours. I owe him at least 11 and a few pints to boot.

We caught up with Matt ahead of his events as part of Off The Shelf and talked about his laureateship, spoken word and Sheffield's art scene.

Could you tell us a little about the Poet Laureateship work you've been doing recently?

All kinds of different projects. I've been writing 11 short poems to go on 11 milestones which are now installed in 11 places around the route of the Olympic torch relay. At the other end of the spectrum, I've been working in children's homes in Derbyshire, which has been a real rich ride. Some really interesting work has come out of it. On arrival the first sentence one of them said was "I don't mean to be rude, but I really, really, really don't want to do any poetry this afternoon." So then I got them to come up with lots of "I don't mean to be rude, but..." phrases.

What events have you got coming up as part of Off The Shelf?

We're running a Young Writers' Festival afternoon at Bank Street Arts, so we're hoping to get lots of young writers from across Yorkshire down to that. There's also the Nonsense event for Edward Lear's 200th birthday, which has been overshadowed by Dickens, so it's an evening of Edward Lear, Spike Milligan, Ogden Nash, clerihews, all sorts of weird and wonderful nonsense poems. There's also going to be a large drawing of Edward Lear wearing the Quangle Wangle hat.

Can you tell us a little bit more about Signposts and how it came about?

I founded Signposts in 1997 on the invitation of the Arts Council literature officer as at that time there wasn't a lot going on. It started with live events above the Red Deer. I remember Carol Ann Duffy and Jackie Kay coming to read for £30 each. They wouldn't do that anymore! Geraldine Monk fell down the stairs a few times and Peter and Ann Sansom gave some good readings.

You've done a lot of work with Sheffield's live literature scene in recent years. Where do you see that expanding to?

Spoken word as a label and an artform is developing. It's triggering a huge release of work and it's a different kind of voice that's associated with poetry. That voice is now growing its own set of limitations, but I still think under a broad banner of poetry in performance it's a massively unexplored form. There's still things with costumes, microphone technique, circular breathing and minimal movement that aren't being done. People used to tar performance poetry with a certain brush – that it's just people performing less good poems and waving their arms about – but I think that's complete rubbish. I think the best case for performance poetry being amazing are Benjamin Zephaniah and Shakespeare.

Do you think spoken word is in a better place than 20 years ago?

My current theory about the scene is at times of recession and naff government people need to say more. So although spoken word was on the rise anyway, since the last election it's been rising more strongly than before. It's the same as the way comedians are always relieved when the Conservatives are back in power. In South Yorkshire over the last 18 months, there's been a swell. It's really taken off.

That's true. There are new nights cropping up all the time. It's been spontaneous, it's been led by people and not funders, which gives you flexibility to do what you want, but to develop more as an artform it needs to create more opportunities for these people to get paid professionally.

What you've described is a microcosm of how Sheffield's always developed its art scene. Because it's lots of villages it's always been under resourced centrally, so that elevating local people to a national or international platform gets neglected. It means we've got some great work locally, but it doesn't create the resources for people to take it to the next stage.

Matt Black will host the following shows as part of Off The Shelf:

**Live Words and Dead Poets Open Mic – 13th October at Winter Gardens
Stuff and Nonsense – 20th October at St Aidan's Church
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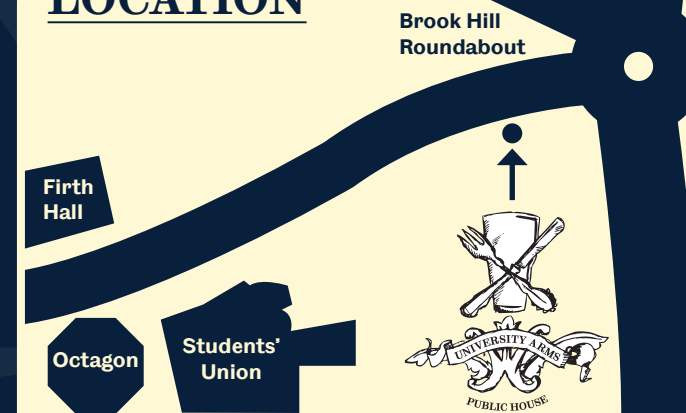
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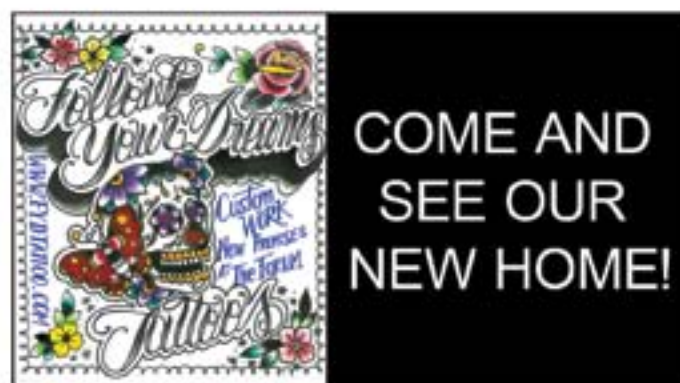
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JONNY WAN.

DIGITAL ILLUSTRATION DONE JUSTICE.
INTERVIEW BY MATT JONES.

It's not often that I look at advertising to be blown away by the art on them. Jonny Wan has the uncertain acheivement of being the best art I've seen on an advertising banner in Sheffield. Immaculate vector work, a name to watch for – real illustrative talent.

A Sheffield lad now based in Manchester, we spoke to Jonny about his inspirations, working processes and current projects.

What got you started as an artist?

Tracing it back to the very beginning, it was my fascination for the cartoons I watched, the comic books I read and the video games I played growing up throughout the mid-late 90s. These three things provided my greatest exposure to visual culture growing up and I still enjoy looking back at these things today. I think what captivated me the most was the imaginative and more often than not abstract worlds these things created for me. This eventually led to me picking up a pencil and start copying my favourite characters, re-imagining them in my own world with different storylines and backgrounds. I also loved to create my own little worlds where characters I loved from TV would battle it out with characters I loved from video games.

Can you describe the process of starting a new piece?

The process is always the same and pretty simple. I will rough out sketches then bring them onto my computer to finalise. The only difference is whether the work is for a client or for a personal project. For a client there is usually a commissioning process with a formal structure, deadlines and contracts. I will have to spend a bit of time talking through the ideas with whoever I'm working with and there will most likely be a couple of rounds of amendments and changes as the project progresses.

Personal projects can take a lot longer to conceive and realise, but can also be the most fulfilling. It's also the time to experiment and really push your work forward and expand your creative practice. Through my own experience, it's the personal stuff that drives the commercial stuff. It's very easy for an illustrator to become known for something and people will commission you to produce that same thing with a slight variation over and over again. That's fair enough and will pay the bills, but I felt it was sapping my creativity and after a while it became dull. Even with my own work now, I'm pushing character design and straying away from pattern and embellished illustration to keep things moving forward.

What are you working on at the moment?

I have just finished a set of weekly editorial illustrations for the Financial Times and have just seen some glove designs launch recently, so a lot of projects are coming into fruition. This leaves me some time to delve back into some personal projects I have been meaning to start and I'll also be looking to push my typography work. I'm also looking to branch out from illustration and explore other areas of creativity through graphic design and photography, looking for ways to incorporate that into what I already do.

Which of your most recent pieces have you enjoyed making the most?

I really enjoyed the editorial pieces for the FT. I love editorial work in general because of its tight turnovers and the variety of topics you get challenged to illustrate. Editorial is not often the best paid and probably won't put your name in lights like an advertising campaign would, but it allows you a lot of freedom to experiment and is often considered the bread and butter for most illustrators. The deadlines can be punishing, with the copy coming through at the end of the day and the finals due for the next morning, so it can really push an illustrator, but for me it's that kind of pressure that gets me working at my best.

How has your art changed over the years?

I think my work has evolved dramatically over the years and hopefully will continue to do so. At university all my work was hand drawn with very minimal colour. It was only after graduating that I started to teach myself to work digitally. I think the more techniques you experiment with, the more that will inform how you create images and in turn your work will evolve. Personally I feel I'm still trying to find my voice illustratively and there are still some aspects of my style that need tweaking. I am happy with my work at the moment, but I'm always looking forward to what else I can bring into the mix.

Recently I have had the chance to see my work applied to products like vinyl toys, engraved phone covers, book jackets and apparel which adds a 3D element to my work. The thought of my work going from something flat into something that's tactile really excites me, so I'm currently trying to find other avenues to make my work stand out in that way.

Who or what are your biggest sources of inspiration?

I turn to things gone by for inspiration. I love looking at ancient art from a variety of cultures and take a lot of influence from the way character forms are constructed and how patterns are implemented. In terms of designers and illustrators, people like Abram Games and Charley Harper spring to mind. I find these guys amazing because of the level of craft involved in their work. This was before the time of computers, the creative suite and the elliptical tool. These guys were planning out their designs using compasses, set squares and rulers, and their work is still an inspiration today.

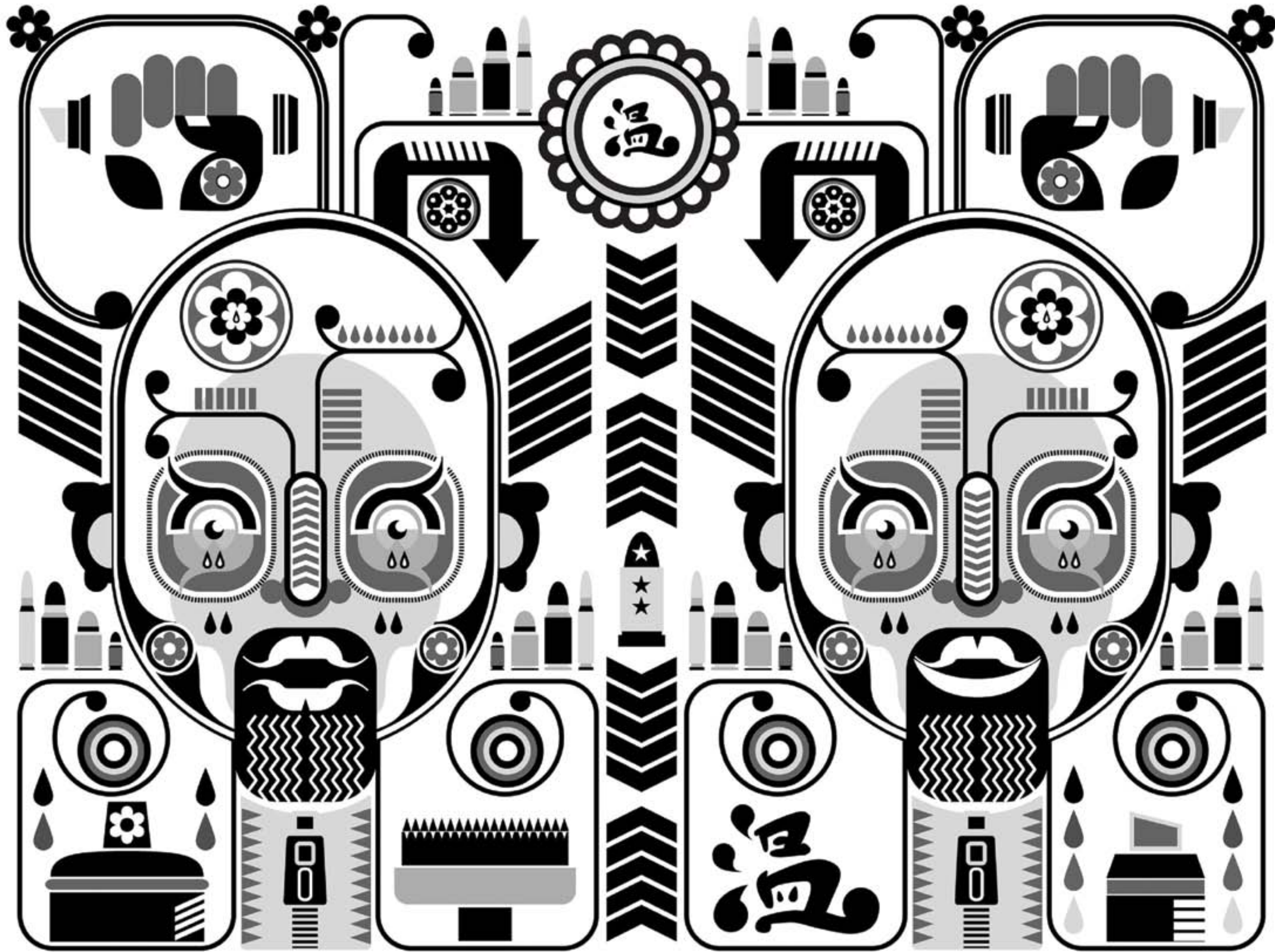
Geometry and symmetry seem to play a large part in your work. Are they actively part of the process, or do they come naturally, so to speak?

The strong lines, geometry and symmetry that appear in my work are just a reflection of the creative aesthetic that excites me. For example, I prefer the angular, almost cubist style cartoons like Dexter's Lab and Samurai Jack over something like He-Man, in which all the characters are more or less anatomically correct. The same thing can be applied to most of the things that I find interesting in art and design, like Cubism and Art Deco. I love looking at these movements for inspiration and I'm sure somehow subconsciously they find a way into my work.

Good advice you wish you'd been told earlier?

Learn the business side of art, like setting up as a sole trader, registering as self employed, getting an accountant and so on. Try and stay away from trends. Create work that has longevity rather than something that's seasonal and fleeting.

jonnywan.com



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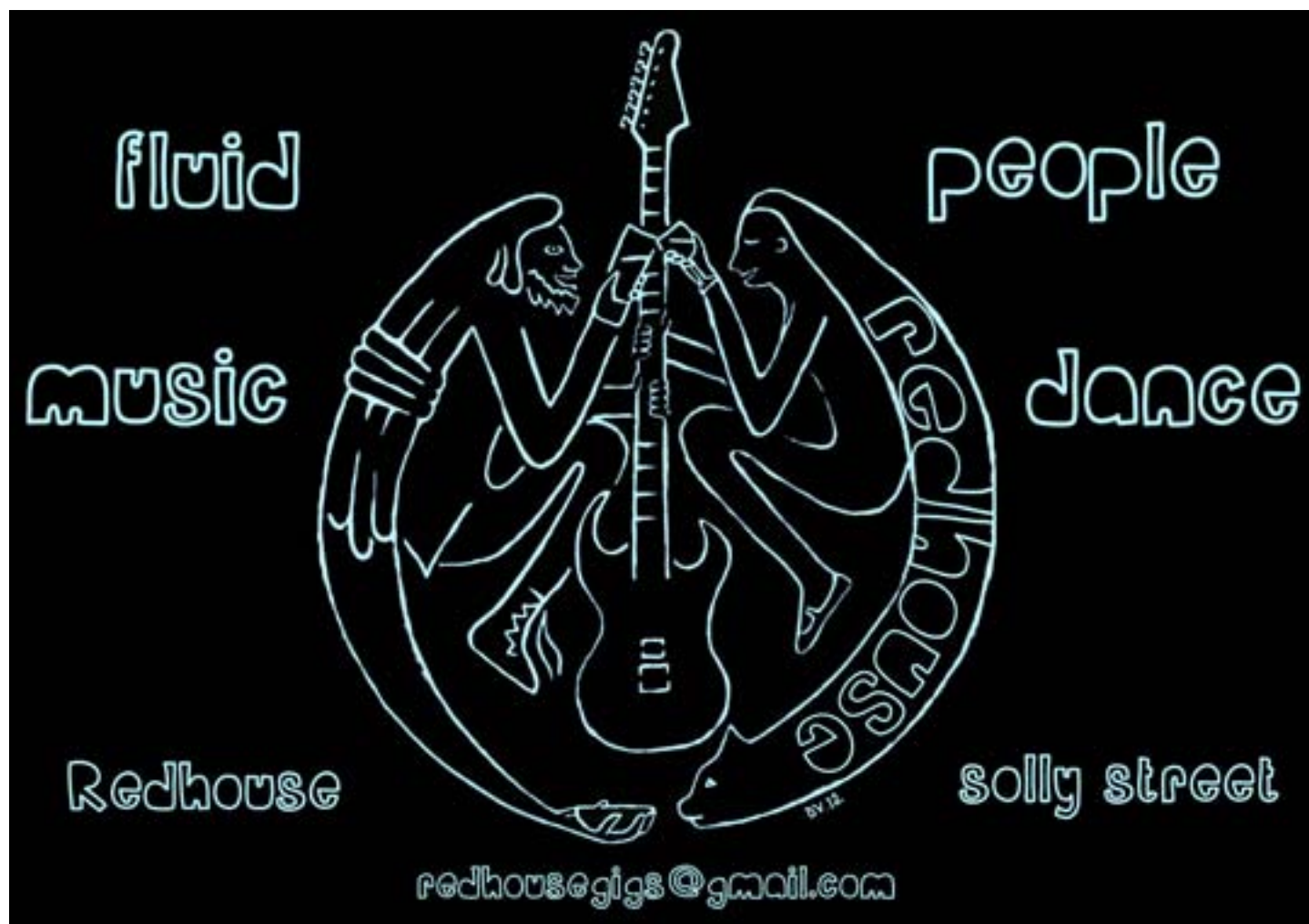
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SOUND.

THE DISCRETE CHARM OF SHEFFIELD BACH SOCIETY.
SIMONE ABRAM.

Readers of Now Then might be forgiven for thinking Sheffield isn't exactly a hub for classical music. But as any good Sheffielder knows, scratch the surface, and there's no telling what you'll find. Who knew that Sheffield has 11 good symphonic choruses, large choirs that rehearse weekly and hold several concerts a year? I'd lived in the city for ten years before I decided to go along to the Sheffield Bach Choir for a tryout, and since then I have sung some fantastic music and seen a side of the city I never knew existed.

For more than 60 years, Sheffield Bach Choir has been known as the jewel in Sheffield's classical scene. It was set up in association with Sheffield University at a time when Bach's music was less well known. True to its name, the choir performs one of Bach's inimitable masses every year around Easter. In 2013 it'll be the St John Passion. Another fixture is Handel's Messiah, always a sellout at the Cathedral before Christmas, with a sing-a-long version at Dore church also in December, complete with mince pies and mulled wine. But at other times their repertoire reaches out in other directions, from Bernstein to Pergolesi, and they have also commissioned work from contemporary composers.

The choir's conductor since 2009 is something of a Yorkshire musical star himself. Widely known as a choral specialist, Dr Simon Lindley is city organist in Leeds, but his grandmother was from Sheffield, and he has cousins in the city. Not one to stand on ceremony, he's the kind of conductor who actually talks to the audience, but more importantly he communicates the music through the choir, in every note and through every pause.

The choir has around 60 adult singers of all ages and ranges, who are friendly and excellent in equal measure, as you would expect a good Sheffield crowd to be. Leaving rehearsals on a Monday night, there's always humming in the air, while rehearsals themselves are focused on the quality of the music. The oldest member of the choir, the outstanding bass singer George, has finally had to throw in the towel at the age of 92, but fortunately there are younger people joining regularly, and the choir is always on the lookout for new members.

This month's concert is a very rare presentation of Handel's great oratorio Solomon at Sheffield Cathedral on Saturday 13th October with the fabulous Northern Festival Orchestra. On November 17th, the programme includes the gloriously vulgar Solemn Mass of St Cecilia by Gounod. Then on December 3rd, the complete Handel's Messiah also takes place at the Cathedral. Details can be found at sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk, whether you fancy hearing what the choir can do or would like to join in yourself.

Simone Abram is an alto with Sheffield Bach Choir.

HURRAY FOR THE RIFF RAFF.

5TH SEPTEMBER.
GREYSTONES.

REVIEWER – ROB ALDAM.

The Backroom in the Greystones has become a great venue to watch live music since the sad demise of the Boardwalk. As well as the high quality and quantity of artists playing there, it’s always nice to enjoy a pint of Thornbridge’s finest.

Although they are minus a double bass player this evening, it doesn’t seem to affect Grassoline one bit. The Chesterfield band played a selection of bittersweet songs from their debut EP, **Mountain and Grave**, alongside newer material. They are heavily influenced by Americana, and their music is heartfelt and vibrant.

Despite almost being dwarfed by her own guitar, Alynda Lee Segarra packs one heck of a punch. The lead singer and creative force behind Hurrah for the Riff Raff has an intriguing past. After running away from her home in the Bronx at the tender age of 17, she hopped freight trains across North America, before becoming part of The Dead Man Street Orchestra and then eventually settling in New Orleans and forming the band.

She takes to the stage on her own and opens with ‘Ramblin’ Gal’, a song from the band’s recent album **Look Out Momma**. I’m immediately struck by her voice. Not only is it incredibly sweet, but it holds a surprising power and resonance. Similarly to the great Etta James, her vocals often threaten to burst out and overpower the music, but they never do. She is then joined on stage by the rest of the band, wielding a menagerie of instruments including double bass, violin, guitar and harmonica.

They play a mixture of tracks from their current album, new material and some older songs. Lead single ‘Look Out Momma’ goes down a treat, as does ‘Little Black Star’, a song taken from John Jacob Niles’ **American Folk and Gambling Songs**. Hurray for the Riff Raff are clearly influenced by many different artists, but put their own unique spin on the material. A common theme running throughout is a connection with the Deep South. Whether it is a cover of Irish singer-songwriter Paul Brady’s ‘The Lakes of Ponchartrain’ or of a Ramblin’ Jack Elliott song, they breathe fresh life into every note. You can see the respect and love they have for traditional roots music.

But what makes Hurray for the Riff Raff a cut above similar acts is the quality of their own material. Whether it be a dance number like ‘Take Me’, the more sombre ‘Blue Ridge Mountains’, or ‘Ode to John and Yoko’, their music showcases an impressive range of depth and variety. Whilst the number of performers on stage continuously fluctuates, the best moments come when Alynda Lee is up there by herself.

The first number of a well-deserved (and refreshingly not pre-planned) encore is a song for her father, a Vietnam veteran. This tops off a night of wonderful musicianship and craft.

SHAMBALA 2012.

22ND - 25TH AUGUST.
MARKET HARBOROUGH.

REVIEWER – BEN JACKSON.

I should start by saying that since I first discovered it all those years ago, Shambala has easily held the mantle of my favourite UK festival. So the question for me this year was not “will it be good?”, but “will it be as mind-warpingly incredible as last time?”

Shambala has always been a festival far more renowned for its overall carnival atmosphere and general sense of freedom than somewhere you go for the big-named headliners. So when I saw that this year’s promo was boasting a pretty uncharacteristically stellar line-up, and promised to be bigger than ever, it led to mild trepidation on my part. It was really born of a fear that this not-too-big, not-too-small, Goldilocks’ dream of a party might lose its hitherto perfect balance of intimate yet vibrant revelry. I had also heard murmurs that security had been beefed up as a result and was re-living the horrors of V Festival’s fascist, gorilla-handed pricks having all but ruined my weekend years back. I was way off on both counts.

It’s no secret that we love Shambala here in Sheffield. In fact, the sheer size of the Sheffield contingent has always meant that you find yourself camping with pockets of different friends and bumping into familiar faces all weekend. This year this was truer than ever, and the bookings seemed to reflect the perfect fit Shambala is for us Sheffielders, with several home-grown acts taking to stages of varying sizes across the three days I was there. We had representation across the genres from the likes of staples of the Sheffield reggae scene Riddimtion, dancehall-come-bass music trailblazer Toddla T featuring the lyrical stylings DRS of Broke ‘n’ English fame, and dub-hop leviathan Roots Manuva.

Although I’m not usually one for the main stage, particularly when there’s a UFO with lasers and drum ‘n’ bass on site, Roots Manuva made it straight onto my agenda and he did not disappoint. Resplendent in a white suit that only a handful of living men could pull off and headwear that made Daft Punk look like wallflowers, he smashed it from start to finish, with a truly amazing crowd response to every tune. Suffice it to say that when he dropped ‘Witness’, the crowd could probably have been heard in Broomhill.

Shambala really comes into its own on Carnival Day, when an ever growing procession made up of some of the best costumes this side of Rio tours the whole site, gathering finally in the main arena to a thundering crescendo of colours and sounds. And then there’s The Woods. Ohh, The Woods. They do strange things to you, but not in an unpleasant way; quite the opposite, provided you don’t mind deciding on a whim that your clothes are a burden, or that starting a commune with four complete strangers is easily the best idea you’ve ever had.

To begin to describe the quality, diversity and charm of the multitude of workshops, eateries, entertainers and activities of all kinds would require a double page spread, with more to do than is possible over a weekend. I suppose that means I’ll have to go back next year, which again promises to be not too hard, and not too soft, but juuust right.

WYRD FOLK.

9TH SEPTEMBER.
RIVERSIDE.

REVIEWER – PAUL ROBSON.

‘Folk, acoustic and roots music with a hint of sedition’ was the slogan used to describe Wyrd Folk 3: The Peasant’s Revolt. In the hands of organiser David Paskell, Wyrd Folk 3 definitely lived up to its billing. Hosted outside at the Riverside Cafe Bar on a warm September evening, the air was filled with quality ale and wry, political quips. All the artists played a solo acoustic set, lending each performance a raw immediacy. Though protest singers littered the gig, people weren’t force fed militant ranting. Instead they were invited to absorb the music’s message in a cheerful and care-free atmosphere.

To open the gig David Paskell played a set of songs concerning past experiences that were both profound and seductive. This helped set the tone for the Nottingham musician Misk Hills Mountain Rambler, who followed with a mix of Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan and a thousand blues players. In fact, Woody Guthrie’s influence was strongly felt throughout the evening.

Next to follow was Phillip Hartley, who delivered tales of South Yorkshire spiked with a perceptive and dry wit. Every musician engaged in a little humorous chat between songs, which helped to ease the mood, especially when Steve Chapman Smith made a flippant innuendo regarding his black bouzouki. Armed with effects pedals, guitar and a microphone, Steve Chapman Smith touched on political topics past and present including the Thatcher era.

It was a shame that there was such a limited turnout for an enthralling show. This was mentioned by the main act Joe Solo, who thanked the small but spirited group. Seated with a guitar, harmonica, tambourine tied to his thigh and maraca attached to his ankle, he became an irrepressible one-man band. He went on to deliver a bewitching performance with a mixture of social rage and eccentric glee. For his final number he passed a collection of homemade percussion around the audience and asked the group to participate in a basic rhythm. This moment fittingly blurred the line between the performer and the audience in an act of unity.

LISTINGS.

HOSTED BY COOL BEANS.
WELOVECOOLBEANS.COM

Ah October. What a month. What a frightfully spooky time. Some of you may get so wrapped up in Halloween fever that you’ll start fearing your own copies of Now Then. Perhaps the illustrations will leap out and attack you whilst you’re enjoying a tranquil browse on a park bench somewhere. Maybe the words in this copy, once read aloud, will summon the demons from the ground beneath, dragging you down into a blistering inferno. Well, that might not happen, but you could still get a paper cut, so promise us you’ll stay vigilant.

THIRSTY EAR.
6th October / The Harley / £3 OTD.

The Thirsty Ear lads celebrate an incredible 5 years of throwing the finest hip-hop/soul/funk/reggae parties around. The mighty DJ Format is stepping up for the occasion. Expect mind-bending vinyl mixes and plenty of rum.

OXJAM.
14th October / Various venues / £4-6 adv.

The extremely reputable Oxjam Festival returns to Sheffield once more, this time enlisting the atmospheric skills of The Bowery, The Great Gatsby, The Washington and The Green Room.

RANDOM HAND.
18th October / Shakespeares / £7 adv.

Fiery metal-reggae-punk-ska from Keighley, these boys have been touring all over the place these last couple of years and always put on a fine show. Support comes from Jake & The Jellyfish, Kerplunk and Wreck the Place.

LEE HURST.
25th October / Hillsborough Memorial Hall / £15 adv.

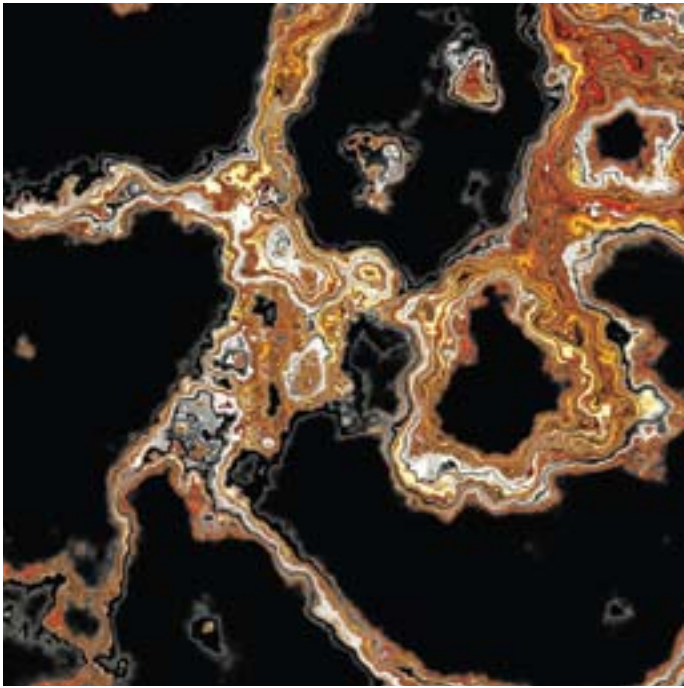
Finally back on the road, Lee Hurst is now casting his comedic eye over acid rain, global warming, bird flu, mad cow disease, bluegrass music addiction and many of the other end of the world scares that never were.

HALLOWEEN THREADS.
27th October / DQ / £5 OTD.

Once a year Threads head honcho Fruits is let loose and gives DQ an almighty Halloween makeover. Rumour has it the planning takes months and the costs are astronomical. Don’t miss out on this audio-visual feast.

FRIGHT NIGHT.
28th October / City Centre / Free.

Sheffield Fright Night returns! Last year’s highlights included a giant puppet, a titan robot, shopping trolley grannies, a fire horse, a Ghostbusters car, the Dr Who Tardis, a dalek, a scream tent and a giant cycling hippo. That’s right, a giant cycling hippo.



PANGAEA.

RELEASE.
HESSLE AUDIO.

REVIEWER – CHECAN LAROMANI.

Pangaea, progressive exponent of all things jungle, techno and house as well as co-founder of Hesse Audio, returns to the label with **Release**, an eight track LP that continues his journey through the darker sides of his previous outputs, following on from ‘Inna Daze’ and ‘Hex’, one of the hardest hitting 12”s of last year. All eight tracks are characterised by their nod to the dungeon end of jungle and techno, as well as the influences of pirate radio with chopped ragga, female vocals and samples of MCs.

Opener ‘Game’ sets the tone for the entire record with its rolling US vocal sample – “Do your thing, just make sure you’re ahead of the game” – propelling the track forward, referencing the distinctive and irregular approach Pangaea takes to his music which makes him stand out so much in a scene often dominated by straight house and techno. It’s a substantial opener, spraying a blend of percussion and jungle snares over a stomping kick and bass that wouldn’t seem out of place in early speed garage.

The next two tracks, ‘Release’ and ‘Trouble’, take a slightly more restrained approach. ‘Release’ is littered with eerie tones and a continuous percussion line that gives it a sense of time, creating an emotive and musical track by Pangaea standards. ‘Trouble’ returns to the magic Pangaea formula with the air of a tune that sounds like tribal jungle under a microscope.

The tempo really picks up on ‘Majestic 12’, a straight 4/4 driving techno roller laced with organ bass lines and bumpy snares. Its upbeat nature almost seems out of place amongst the dark and sombre tones of its predecessors. The slightly rowdier nature continues on ‘Time Bomb’, a foot stomping track befitting of the name. If anything, these two tracks grab the listener’s attention after an opening set of tracks that can at points merge into one. ‘Middleman’ follows, and is the most obvious indication of the dubstep roots of Pangaea and the Hesse imprint. 2-step kicks and a weighty snare punctuate brass lines and the odd vocal snippet. It’s a solid and complete track that harks back to the early days of the dubstep movement, a theme carried on with ‘Aware.’

Release ends with a track called ‘High.’ Almost devoid of drums, it instead covers a more ambient atmosphere with the odd crackle and vocal that sound like a scratched CD, skipping in a way that isn’t easy on the ear.

All in all, this is a landmark release for Pangaea, and Hesse is a fine record label, both progressive and inclusive of all that has made Pangaea an exciting standout amongst today’s plethora of music producers.



TOY.

TOY.
HEAVENLY RECORDINGS.

REVIEWER – ALAN BYATT.

Hip. Brooding. Polo neck wearing scenesters. These are just a few labels Toy are likely to endure. However, these non-believers clearly haven’t been listening. Creating a debut album that sounds like a bluffers guide to some of the great shoegaze, post-punk and krautrock bands of the last five decades, Toy take inspiration for their psychedelic jams from the likes of The Velvet Underground, Neu and The Fall.

Dark swirling feedback, ominous synth notes and searing guitar transcends for the howling opener ‘Colours Running Out’, channeling 70s German experimental rock. The understated ‘Dead & Gone’ gives more of a dreamy My Bloody Valentine feel with its interlocking guitars, slow grooving baseline and simple melodic synth. The vocals are cushioned by a bed of reverb, giving depth to such tracks as the haunting ‘Lose My Way’ and ‘My Heart Skips A Beat’, which hint at the bands pop sensibilities through colourful arrangements and warmer, playful melodies. This again comes through on the chorus of the atmospheric ‘The Reasons Why’, yet the verse still shows dissident ideals with the heavily treated vocals. Although Toy clearly have a love of early electronic music, the minimal ‘Omni’ adds further texture to the album, drawing inspiration from experimental composer Steve Reich.

One of the reasons the album works so well is the way it captures the vibe of the band’s shows. Having spent the last couple of years touring and in part supporting The Horrors, Toy have clearly been taking note. Barely uttering a word, they manage to release the feeling of euphoria into the smallest of venues, with an array of guitar pedals, heavy reverbs and dizzying amber lights all added into the mix for the thrilling Spacemen 3-esque ‘Motoring’. The hypnotic ‘Kopter’ matches the uncompromising, repetitive nature of The Velvet Underground, building to a climax of swelling feedback through the extreme thrashing guitars and shimmering synth lines.

Edgy. Chic. German Art Rockers. Yes, this is of course all true, but Toy have managed to back this up with a debut album that draws on a treasury of musical heritage and favours substance over style (thank god). While a handful of people hang around for the latest trend and new uninspired artists wait for a bandwagon to jump, Toy will be the name on everybody’s lips.



GRIZZLY BEAR.

SHIELDS.
WARP RECORDS.

REVIEWER - TASHA FRANEK.

Any band recommended by Radiohead is worth a listen in my book, so in 2008 when Jonny Greenwood mentioned Grizzly Bear as his favourite band, my love affair with the psychedelic pop group began.

A good few years into their success, the Brooklyn-bred boys already had a fantastic collection of material as they toured with Radiohead and began to really make a name for themselves at a selection of US festivals. Still going strong as a touring band in 2012, the release of their fourth studio album **Shields** has been the words on everybody’s lips, and now that it’s finally here it feels a little bit like Christmas has come three months early.

When a band releases something as strong and loveable as Grizzly Bear’s previous album **Veckatimest**, there is undoubtedly a great deal of pressure on them for their next move. On first listen, I wasn’t blown away by Shields, but I wasn’t disappointed either, so I listened again and again. Each time it played through, I fell a little more in love with each track until I came to the decision that they have once again managed to create a masterpiece. A natural progression in musical maturity from the previous albums, Shields ties together all of the genres which have been thrown into the band over the years. Perhaps it’s the four-year relationship making me ever-so-slightly biased, but there is something incredibly compelling which told me I’d get it in the end, and I was right.

Opening track ‘Sleeping Ute’ captures everything that I like about Grizzly Bear, from the near perfect harmonies to the slashing guitar and layers upon layers of percussion. There is so much going on, you immediately feel as though you have to listen to it again to make sure you didn’t miss anything. On the flip side, tracks like ‘The Hunt’ and ‘What’s Wrong’ follow more of an airy, linear structure. In fact, almost every song could come under its own individual micro-genre, but somehow they all seem to slot together.

There is something about this album which strikes me as a “love it or hate it” sort of deal. It’s enchanting, and if you give it the time of day I’d put money on you falling in love with it, but I can see some people missing the charm. For those of you who are with me, Grizzly Bear’s world tour comes as close as Manchester on 18th October, so I’ll see you there.



JOE BANFI.

IRON EP.
COMMUNION RECORDS.

REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

Sheffield-based songwriter Joe Banfi has enjoyed a great rise in prominence over the past year, due in part to his captivating live performances. His latest EP is mostly recorded with the same minimal instrumentation you might find in such shows, with subtle washes of colour added by cello and percussion that accentuates what’s already there without taking over. It does, however, have moments of higher drama, where a combination of full kit percussion and effects on instrumentation lend an extra energy to match the dynamism of the vocals.

Opener ‘Guts and Bones’ sets things off nicely, starting with sparse broken chords and affected strings alongside the lonely voice of Banfi, before the entry of a pleasantly lilting guitar line brings things up to speed. Banfi’s lyrics, occasionally a weak point in the past, have improved on this record, with a mixture of abstracted imagery sitting nicely alongside more directly personal lines such as the main hook: ‘Show yourself useful / Not just guts and bones.’

Banfi then gives us an adaptation of American folk standard ‘Where Did You Sleep Last Night’. This is set in a different mode than the traditional song, with suspended chords hovering between minor and major. It’s obviously subjective, but I feel Banfi suffered a little on this track from the weight of past renditions. With so many pained versions, it seems like Banfi has tried to inject almost too much emotion into the song, and the intensity of his voice which creates such tension elsewhere seems slightly forced on this track. It’s a shame, as it is quite a novel take on such an established classic.

‘See You At Home’ is a little more restrained, the guitar line and voice standing alone at first. The interwoven melodies of the vocals and cello sit nicely in this track, and again Banfi shows a new maturity in his lyrics.

Finishing number and title track ‘Iron’ is probably the strongest on the record, building again from just guitar and voice into something really quite epic. The double tracked vocal definitely has a Bon Iver feel to it at the beginning, but Banfi makes his mark firmly by the second verse as the song builds in a steady crescendo and his gritty voice is let loose with full intensity after a touching lyrical refrain of ‘It must be your taste / There’s still something I find in this place’, a reference to a lover, but perhaps also to the constant threads that run through Banfi’s music that survive each evolution, and provide that raw emotion that makes his work so captivating.

WARREN ELLIS.

BEARDED VIOLINIST TALKS DIRTY THREE, NICK CAVE AND SOUNDTRACKS.
INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

Warren Ellis is a multi-instrumentalist best known as the violinist in Australian rock band Dirty Three. Formed in 1992, Dirty Three's live performances have been an inspiration to many an instrumental group, particularly the so-called post rock movement of the 1990s and 2000s. Fusing country and western, rock and roll, folk and punk into one riotous, semi-improvised sound, Dirty Three are still playing together after 20 years and eight studio albums, having put out the return to form **Toward the Low Sun** on Bella Union earlier this year.

Warren has also worked with Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds since the mid 90s, and also forms part of the psychedelic, beefed-up Bad Seeds spin-off group Grinderman, who so far have two albums under their belt. Since 2005, Warren – currently based in Paris – has also collaborated on a number of films scores with Nick Cave, including **The Road**, **The Proposition** and **The Girls of Phnom Penh**.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Dirty Three. Did you ever expect the band to have this kind of longevity?

No, I think if you think about that sort of stuff it never happens. It's like Christmas – it never comes. At the start you just hope you can continue to create stuff that you feel good about. We never actually thought about how long we'd go for, but we did ask one question at the start. I think it was me that asked, "When do you think we'll stop?" And the answer was, "when we feel like we haven't got anything else to say".

I've never looked at anything in terms of how long it will go on for. I'm always surprised when I get another year out of it. I've always been one to take what I can and do it with the same attitude that I've always had. And I'm still doing it 20 years later, which baffles me. When I think it's been more than 20 years that we've been together, I do feel very proud of that achievement. It really does feel like something – more than I've been involved in anything in my life.

How has the new material from Toward the Low Sun worked in a live setting so far?

It's been really good. It's really developed since we recorded it, and it sounds much better now. Recording is always documenting where you are at that point in time, and then you usually get out and start playing it, and the songs either work or they don't work. That's just always been the way things have gone in any group I'm in. Sometimes it works one time in the studio and never feels right again on stage, or something just doesn't translate into the live setting.

With this one, I think we continue to play most of the songs in some format. We tried to get them all up and running, but I think two have fallen by the wayside. It's been great, because they've kept developing and kept the freshness in the shows.

You've spoken before about how you thought the band might have run its course after you released Cinder back in 2005. How did you overcome this barrier for Toward the Low Sun?

We actually started talking about what it was that still made the live shows feel vital and inspiring. We'd come off and think, "Why can't we do this in the studio?" And then we approached the studio in a much more simplified way. Our songs had been getting more and more structured, and there wasn't a lot of room for improvisation and risk. Cinder was a logical point to get to after all that explorative stuff we were doing, but a lot of that stuff just didn't translate live, and we had a hard time performing it, because what felt genuinely interesting to us is the way we interact when we play.

We've never been a band who wanted to play the same songs every night in the same way and be happy with that. It was always about taking risks in the live setting, and knowing that the show can really work, or just fall flat on its face. That's genuinely still thrilling after 20 years – knowing that we can either do a great show or an absolute dog of a show. The material we were coming up with before wasn't particularly encouraging that aspect of our raison d'être. When we realised that, then we got in the studio, and the first two tracks on the album were the first two tracks that we put down, and suddenly there was a way forward.

There's a certain thing that goes on when the three of us play. It's very much a group, the Dirty Three, in the same way that Crazy Horse are a group. When they play, they sound like Crazy Horse. It doesn't sound like anyone else, whether you love 'em or hate 'em. I'm not saying we're in the same league as them, but if you take one of us away the group doesn't sound the same.

To me, Toward the Low Sun seems like a return to your original method in a way.

Yeah – a real re-stating of our objectives and a move forward too, because in the past we couldn't have made a record like that. I'd certainly lost the narrative of the group for various reasons, and I found it hard, maybe because I'd been doing a lot of score work and a lot of stuff with Nick [Cave] singing. Although you go into it with the same intention, it's a different place that you find for what you do. I think I'd lost that narrative and it was a real relief to find it again. Our main concern has always been how we play together, because as long as it feels like it's gone somewhere – in our minds at least – then it's worth continuing. We never formed the band to make any friends or top any charts. It was like war.

I know you are focusing on Dirty Three right now, but back in 2002 you put out a solo EP. Have you considered doing a full-length solo album?

I did have a whole thing ready to go. I did it live a couple of times – once in Canada and once in London. It was thrilling to do it the first time, but the second time it had already lost that... there just wasn't that interaction. I did have plans to finish off this whole album, but other things came along and I just wondered what the point of it was really. And then I started using some of it for soundtracks and theatre work, so I started to give the songs a life in a different context.

Did you find it refreshing to be able to do work on soundtracks with Nick, as well as Bad Seeds and Grinderman material, and then return to Dirty Three when you were ready?

Yeah, it's the best thing I've ever done. Just to go and do other things. The soundtrack work's been great, because it encourages you to be bolder and step outside your domain, because you can get a bit stuck doing your own thing. A film is something else and you have to find a different way in. That for me was incredibly liberating, and certainly had a big effect on everything that followed. It just kept the whole thing alive, which is what you want. I don't want to keep doing this if I don't feel anything for it.

With soundtracks as well, I suppose it's the fact that there's someone else who is removed from the songwriting process who has the ultimate decision about whether something stays in or gets cut out.

Yeah, and that can be a blessing and a curse. You have to let go of things and you have to fight for things. The closest equivalent is an architect building a big house. You might have all these great intentions for it, but if the person buying the tiles comes in and picks a horrible colour, then you're sort of stuck with that. Sometimes people can make great suggestions, and sometimes you just have to roll with it.

Which has been your favourite soundtrack that you've done so far?

The Proposition [2005, written by Nick Cave] is very dear to me, because it was one of the first ones I did and it happened in such an organic, explosive way – very quick and very cathartic, in a way.

But I'd have to say that the Jesse James one [**The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford**, 2007] is probably the one, if I had to pick. Interestingly it's the only bit of music I've been involved in that I can put on and be removed from it. When I went to the cinema and saw the effect of it, it really blew me away. I don't like listening to my own music, because I'm aware of all the stuff that went wrong – it's hard to let go of that like I can do with other people's music – but the Jesse James one is one that I feel removed from, and I really like that score and love that film.

anchorandhope.com



PHOTO - NICHOLAS HARRISON.



Sheffield post-punk four-piece Wooderson only recently released their debut album **Let The Man Speak**, but have already firmly established their presence in the city. They have impressed with their sound on record, but ultimately shine when in their element on stage, and will continue to do so with tour dates throughout winter. We spoke to guitarist Loic Turkey about recording, DIY music and... George Michael.

There are definitely some softer moments on this album compared to your older stuff, like ‘Too Many Questions’ and ‘Mint Condition’. Was this a conscious decision?

It was not a conscious decision really, as the intensity of our songs depended on how stoned I was at the time of writing. I have often been described as a gentleman but never a gentle man and I think that sums up my attitude.

What sort of bands or artists were you listening to while writing Let The Man Speak?

I would always cite George Michael as my main musical influence when writing songs. His bass work is above outstanding and I think the influence really shows, certainly on songs like ‘Sleepwalking’ and ‘Let The Man Speak’. Also his sense of melody is second to none and only Mick Hucknall or Freddie Mercury rival his vocal range. Surprising as it may seem, George Michael has done more for Wooderson than any other band or artist that has ever existed.

Did recording in the Audacious Art Space have an impact?

The Audacious Art Experiment is our home, not spiritually but quite literally. We spend half our week inside the Audacious Space. We don’t particularly enjoy recording but doing it where we felt comfortable made it as fun as can be. There is a microwave and we know where the toilet and local amenities are, which is important for us. It also meant we could record with someone we trusted and who knew exactly how we needed to sound, rather than someone who is happy to take the money, make us sound like something we’re not, and not give a toss about anything but his portfolio and a stack of cash.

How important do you think collectives like The Audacious Art Experiment are to local music?

Without a doubt I believe collectives like The Audacious Art Experiment are paramount to DIY music, locally, nationally and globally. They provide an alternative to the irresponsible spending of money and allow musicians and consumers to realise this and avoid being at the mercy of middlemen who set prices based on profit and beer sales. From a consumer’s view, The Audacious Art Experiment means I can watch and hear incredible music for a realistic and entirely fair price. From a performer’s view, I can show you what I’m made of without the guilt of ripping off the consumer. Without collectives like The Audacious Art Experiment, I wouldn’t even bother picking up my guitar.

How would you rate Sheffield for up-and-coming bands?

I’m not really sure it’s my place to say, as I can’t confirm whether it’s any better or worse than cities like Leeds, Bradford, London or Stoke. In each city there is a smorgasbord of incredible music amongst hundreds who are maybe not so great. Sheffield is no different and I guess we’ve just got to be happy that you can see a variation on any night of the week.

What bands around Sheffield should people be keeping an eye on?

There is one genius in town. His name is Adam John Humphrey and he performs under the name Toucans. He is a 50s throwback of the highest calibre and his music makes me melt like a tin of Roses in a bubble bath. His songs are beautiful.

wooderson.bandcamp.com



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FILMREEL.

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DEBTS AND DERIVATIVES.

JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES.

A critic is nothing but a well-informed individual with a megaphone, as a fellow Portuguese filmmaker once said on a half-remembered televised discussion panel from years ago.

It was a hugely entertaining set-up. Established filmmakers who had endured the tightening grip of the fascist regime were sharing air-time with up-and-coming auteurs who challenged their views at every opportunity. Another amusing aspect was the way most of them would refute any allegation of being influenced by various masters of Cinema.

As true as my opening statement may be, I much favour the view that film critics are necrophagous intellectuals who suffer from serious delusions of their own importance. They tend to believe that their opinion matters more than the film itself. As far as they're concerned, once the credits start rolling a film becomes a dead leviathan at their mercy and they soon start tracing its outline in chalk, as in a crime scene, proceeding then with the onslaught of comparisons with previous closed or unresolved cases.

Before I go any further, I must stress my admiration for a handful of British critics, whose personalities inform their views in a refreshing way. Although Mark Kermode took his time to grow on me, his appreciation of Walerian Borowczyk's unparalleled output and championing of David Lynch's immensely underrated **Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me** (1992) are evidence of his heart being in the right place. The same can be said for Mark Cousins, whose documentary TV series (and subsequent book) **The Story of Film: An Odyssey** is both a love letter to Cinema and an archival treasure for the future. Then there's Jonathan Romney, who may be a less visible figure but whose consistent views have made unconventional visions accessible to the wider public, particularly in his astute scrutiny of Portuguese Cinema, in which he pinpoints the key aspects of a helplessly avant-garde culture.

My distaste for critics, which I acknowledge is in direct conflict with my activities here as editor of Filmreel, pales in comparison to another side of this altogether more structured culture I chose to inhabit.

In Britain, there's a definite historical tendency to perceive the criticism of art as an art unto itself. Appreciation of an art form is, of course, valid and very much invaluable in the process of dialogue one aims to establish. But there's a large cross-section of 'appreciators' that use this to further themselves and their agendas, whilst trying to shake the shackles of mediocrity they were born with. This is even more striking when it comes to film. Certainly, all filmmakers make films because we love films. But, with the exception perhaps of a handful of names from the French 'nouvelle vague' of the 1950s and 60s, not all film critics can make films. I would go further and say that, with the exception of individuals like Quentin Tarantino, Pedro Almodóvar or Martin Scorsese, very few film buffs are good filmmakers either. This brings me to the point that provides the title of this article.

There's a pantheon of filmmakers who have become an integral part of the film lexicon. Along the progress of film as an art form, the names Antonioni, Tarkovsky, Bergman, Hitchcock, Welles and Kubrick have become synonyms of innovation in the use of cinematic techniques. In their own personal way, they all dug deeper into their subjects. Everything they expressed was infused with sheer perfectionism and a deep understanding of the medium. What they also shared in common was the aspiration to better themselves by pushing boundaries and challenging expectations. Enthusiasts play a role in sustaining the popularity of these filmmakers, but now and again you come across observations that totally undervalue their achievements. Such views not only demean what these visionaries delivered for posterity, but they also fail to recognise the crucial difference between "being indebted" to something and "being merely derivative".

There's no questioning that cinema has evolved from other pre-existing art forms: composition, tone and depth-of-field had all been established in painting; the technical possibilities of photography enabled those further; theatre provided basic notions of mise-en-scène and the deeper psychological consequences of acting; and literature informed the word, spoken and written. But it needs to be added that music and poetry, with their capacity to evoke and create unexpected correlations between a phrase and an idea, are what cinema resembles most when at its best.

It's in the ongoing practice of filmmaking that the terms "indebted to" and "derivative" can easily get muddled up. A film that is being made or comes out now will unavoidably – often with some degree of self-awareness – touch upon themes and find ways to present them that have been done before. There is nothing wrong with being referential, and even less with overtly paying homage to something great – be it from a renowned classic or an obscure work of exploitation.

Yet when filmmakers reduce a section of their film – something that has been done before in an altogether superior and more complete way – to, let's say, a plot device, they are delivering something derivative. This is unquestionable, whether they acknowledge the previous work as inspiration or not.

An example may come handy at this point. In **The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** (2009 original or 2011 remake), the turning point in the investigation comes with the "looking again and better" at a detail in a succession of images. Over 40 years earlier, Michelangelo Antonioni's **Blow-Up** (1966) introduced us to a photographer who overlooks a detail in a series of casually taken pictures. When the time comes to "look again", what we have is complete integration of narrative with character, direction of point-of-view and knowledge of the camera angles that best convey them. By displaying a mere cleverness of plot, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* makes its scene derivative.

On the other hand, filmmakers who understand the essence of film and seek to explore the possibilities of the medium further may still have their own influences and points of reference. In that sense, they are indebted to someone who preceded them, but never derivative.

A simple yet irrefutable example is Ingmar Bergman's **Persona** (1966), which uses August Strindberg's play **The Stronger** as its starting point but is far from an adaptation. In fact, the resemblance ends on the set-up of having two women interacting – one silent, the other filling the silence with chatter and personal confessions. Indebted to Strindberg? Yes. Utterly original in form, tone and structure? Without a doubt.

The name of Leos Carax has found its way onto these pages before. His sparse yet exhilarating filmography is informed by the ground-breaking work that preceded it. Based on all accounts, his new film **Holy Motors** is one of the most original you'll ever see. And still, every section of it includes a nod to a previous cinematic artefact – even self-reference, to some degree. Of all upcoming releases, it's the one I'm most looking forward to watching. Oh and, before I forget, it co-stars Kylie Minogue...

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NIKI BIERTON.

It's fast approaching us, the horror film festival held at the Showroom over the weekend of Halloween. This year is no different to any other year – the line up is full of gore, screams and rising tension. It's going to be a scorcher, not only because of the films on show, but because there will also be an accompanying exhibition. Local artist Mute is curating and has entered his own art into the exhibition, celebrating some classic horror films that have been shown at the festival since 2008 with unique posters of such classics as **The Evil Dead**, **The Thing** and **The Lost Boys**. Guess what? It's also free. And while you're looking at the art, go ahead and check out this selection of films.

The first one up is a hide-behind-your-popcorn film – Steve Stone's **Entity**. Set in the Siberian forest, TV show *Darkest Secrets* sets out to uncover the mystery behind the discovery, and dismissal of 34 unidentified bodies found buried deep within the forest. Along with psychic Ruth Peacock, played by an awesome Dervla Kirwan, they delve into the mystery of the bodies, but what they don't expect is the horror awaiting their arrival. This is, as producer Rob Speranza told me, "a movie that makes you not want to go into the dark kitchen alone at night", full of tension, intensity and atmospheric music. For me, just watching the creepy trailer is enough to make me want to see it again and again.

In a completely different vein is found footage anthology **V/H/S**, which is an interesting watch. A group of miscreants break into an old house on the request of a mysterious employer in search of a VHS stored somewhere in the house. When they get there though, they find hundreds of tapes and decide to go through each one to find the one they need, bringing in short films directed by horror filmmakers such as Ti West ('*The Innkeepers*') and Adam Wingard. However, even though the film is fully POV, it doesn't seem nauseating, despite featuring plenty of gore, especially during the 'Amateur Night' segment, in which one character starts devouring another. So yes, lots of fake blood and guts.

Remember though, preceding almost every feature is a short film, for instance **72** and **3:00 AM**. I would recommend you get there in time to watch them, because sometimes even the shortest of films can leave the most lasting of memories.



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Dubcentral first sprang from The Vine 12 years ago and has since twisted its roots deep into the core of the city. These events have become part of Sheffield, transforming venues across the city with colour, noise and good vibes. They are more than just music nights; they embody a whole scene, culture and community, making Dubcentral the definitive dub and reggae club in Sheffield.

Every month, roots music from all over the world cascades through a bespoke, heart-poundingly loud soundsystem, as some of the country's finest DJs take to the decks. Live MCs and brass instrumentalists direct the show as the room bounces all night, joined by a shared love of the music, pausing only to sip cans of Red Stripe. Nights like these don't just happen. Dubcentral has been carved and sculpted over the years by its own rich history.

When it was first growing up and finding its feet, Dubcentral was given a home in The Everyone Centre on Broadfield Road. This Afro-Caribbean community centre is the kind of place where people meet up to play dominoes, eat good food, chat with the friendly staff and watch huge national and international soundsystems play music. It was here that the night developed links with the old school dub crew in Sheffield. The likes of Bryon, Yammi, Father Musi and Teacher Lion will always be closely linked to Dubcentral events, as they are as much a part of the tapestry as the decor on the walls.

Dubcentral has gone on to feature at some the biggest venues in and around Sheffield, including The Boardwalk, Yellow Arch, DLS, Club Shhh, M-Code, Corporation, The Harley and The Washington. As well as new venues, Dubcentral has also seen a lot of new faces. The crew has expanded to include the likes of Emily Vincent, Gita, Paul Lee, Fatta, Mr Meerkat, Megaman, Sista Jahin, Alan Deadman and Smiley Maxx, now all well recognised names in the city.

Dubcentral has become Sheffield's worst kept secret, growing from strength to strength and gaining more and more followers every month. Although they now do even larger events, like hosting The Cat Empire, Dreadzone and Desmond Dekker, and curating the Tramlines World Stage in the Peace Gardens, they have never lost sight of their roots and their ethos: good music and good vibes. Here's to another 12 years.

RUTLAND ARMS.

86 BROWN STREET.
RUTLANDARMSPEOPLE.CO.UK

The Rutland Arms is no stranger to these pages, being as it is one of the best places in Sheffield to enjoy a flavoursome, locally crafted, reasonably priced ale in a convivial atmosphere. But this under-appreciated public house, also known for its spacious beer garden and excellent weekly quiz, has something else up its sleeve – its unsung but superlative food menu.

Served between midday and 9pm Monday to Saturday, and midday and 6pm on Sundays, the food at the Rutland is of a much higher quality than you might expect on first arrival. Although it is without a doubt a pub lovers' pub, the menu here is more akin to a decent restaurant with pub grub prices. For example, sausage & mash with onion gravy will set you back £6.50, while spinach and mushroom macaroni cheese with Henderson's garlic bread is £5.75.

The Rutland also offers a good range of burgers and sandwiches. Top of the list for the former has got to be the chorizo burger, closely followed by the classic beef cheeseburger and the battered halloumi burger with mustard mayo, which is apparently a very popular choice. Sandwich wise, you've got the steak sandwich with pickles and mustard at a round £5 and the fish finger sandwich with tartar sauce for £4.50. A chip butty will set you back £2.75, but we would strongly recommend that you upgrade to the Ratty Butty – chips, melted cheese and spicy tomato sauce – or the marvellously named Slutty Ratty Butty, which adds bacon into the mix.

All in all, the Rutland is a great place to pass the time with a couple of pints and a hearty plate of food in front of you. As well as all of the above, it also hosts regular folk music nights in the form for Acoustic Loveliness (third Saturday of the month), Play On (first Friday of the month at 8.30pm) and The Robber's Dog (second Saturday of the month at 8pm).

Keep up to speed via the following web links, and get those Slutty Ratty Butties down you.

rutlandarmspeople.co.uk
facebook.com/rutland.arms
twitter.com/RutlandArms

FAVOURITES.

OUR PICK OF THE BUNCH.

SHARROW FESTIVAL.

6TH OCTOBER.
MOUNT PLEASANT PARK.
SHARROWFESTIVAL.BTCK.CO.UK

Sharrow Festival had to be cancelled earlier this year due to heavy rain, but fear not, because it will be back with gusto this month. Taking place on Mount Pleasant Park at the top of Abbeydale Road, the festivities will run from midday till 5.30pm, with local bands like K.O.G & The All Star Revolution, Truly Apparent, Soul Circle Gang and Jungle Lion occupying two stages, backed up by all manner of stalls, food outlets, activities and workshops for all the family. And it's free!

The festival will be followed by more live bands at The Vine on Cemetery Road in the evening. Anyone who can volunteer time or money to the project, visit the above website and click on 'How to get involved'.

MERCURY TAXIS.

0114 266 266 2
MERCURYTAXIS.COM

When moving to a new city, your first choice of taxi company can be an arbitrary one. Not so here in Sheffield, particularly in this age of technological wizardry. As happy customers of Mercury for the best part of a decade, we've witnessed this independent, family-run business move with the times and evolve into a super efficient, modern service.

Among their recent innovations, in which they have invested £2.5 million, are the Intelligent Voice Recognition system, which makes the average call incredibly fast at around ten seconds, an integrated GPS system that allocates the nearest car to you at the point of booking, and the Mercury iPhone app. This app actually lets you track your cab almost in real time, so gone are the days of that phone call to find out where your taxi is only to be told it's 'on its way'. Exciting times.

DIGITAL POETRY SLAM.

WORD LIFE, NOW THEN & OFF THE SHELF.
NOWTHENMAGAZINE.COM/DIGITALPOETRYSLAM.

As part of Off The Shelf 2012, Word Life and Now Then are running a poetry slam with a difference. The concept is the same as your average slam, with poets competing to impress the audience, but this time the audience is online, and so are the poems.

In honour of the festival's 21st anniversary, we have filmed 21 local poets reading poems at 21 venues across the city, and it's up to you to vote for your favourite. The winner will be announced at the Off The Shelf closing party. Get involved by going to nowthenmagazine.com/digitalpoetryslam and have a look for yourself.

NEVERNESS.

DAVID ZINDELL.
VOYAGER PUBLISHING.

For those of you who are unable to forget the meaningful journey that was Phillip Pullman's Dark Materials trilogy, this book sends you back into the depths of far flung fantasy-adventure meets philosophy. To boot, this book was written in 1988, some seven years before to Mr Pullman's efforts, and thus wins trivia points galore. **Neverness** is part one of a trilogy following the life of the young pilot Mallory Ringess in a far-flung futuristic society where mathematicians and pilots have formed into 'orders'. It is a tale that breaks the traditional tech heavy boundaries of science fiction, while asking universal questions about the human condition. This is a must-read book that asks the reader to suspend belief but also enquire at its roots.

FORCED ENTERTAINMENT.

0114 279 8977
FORCEDENTERTAINMENT.COM

It's no secret that there are some great theatre spaces in Sheffield. What is less known is that we have a theatre company that has been established for over 25 years and has been described by The Guardian as 'Britain's most brilliant experimental theatre company'. Forced Entertainment is a group of six artists on a mission to transform perceptions of theatre with a dazzling mixture of performance art, dance, stand-up comedy and, most recently, themes of multiple futures.

On this quest to explore the outer limits of their art they have, in their own words, "made lists, played games, spoken gibberish, stayed silent, made a mess, dressed up, stripped down, confessed to it all, performed magic tricks, told jokes, clowning around, played dead, got drunk, told stories and performed for six, 12 and even 24 hours at a stretch". Worth a look at their website, we'd say.

AMÉL CLOTHING.

AMELSNOW.COM
HELLO@AMELSNOW.COM

Considering its distance from any kind of meaningful snowy build up, Sheffield has a relatively strong skiing and snowboarding contingency. Amél is a new independent clothing company aimed squarely at this group, offering high-quality garments that keep the warmth in without breaking the bank.

Amél specialises in thermal base layers with features like moisture migration, micro-knit technology and flat seams, all of which help keep the snowy wolf from the door. Currently, they offer thermals for men and women, which can also be worn on an everyday basis, and affordable unisex tees. Check them out on the above web link.



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KEY.

- = REAL ALE HOUSES & BREWERIES.
- = OFF THE SHELF FESTIVAL VENUES.

1. DRAM SHOP
2. THE RIVERSIDE BAR
3. THE RISING SUN
4. SHEFFIELD UNION
5. THE HARLEY
6. THE UNIVERSITY ARMS
7. SHAKESPEARES
8. THE RED HOUSE
9. CADS & DLS
10. RED DEER
11. CITY HALL
12. FACT TOTEM
13. RARE AND RACY
14. BALANCE
15. GOLDEN HARVEST
16. FORUM SHOPS
17. DEVONSHIRE CAT
18. CORPORATION
19. THE PLUG
20. THE LEADMILL
21. SHEFFIELD THEATRES
22. THE RUTLAND ARMS
23. STODDART BUILDING
24. SHOWROOM CINEMA
25. HALLAM UNION
26. MONTH OF SUNDAYS
27. THELMA'S CAFE
28. MOGUL ROOM
29. PORTER BOOKS
30. DELANEY'S MUSIC BAR
31. REGATHER
32. ABBEYDALE BREWERY
33. ABBEYDALE PICTURE HOUSE
34. THE OLD SWEET SHOP

